BULLETIN

OF THE

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

no. 1-16

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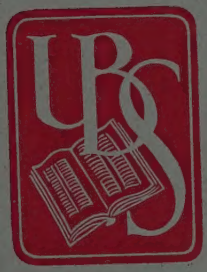

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1950 - 53

FIRST QUARTER

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no. 1-16
1950-53

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

A WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF BIBLE SOCIETIES.

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UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

BULLETIN

FIRST QUARTER - 1950

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Editorial

AT the meeting held in Dunblane in June, 1948, the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES passed a resolution that a Bulletin should be issued "containing sections dealing with translation, literacy, home propaganda and any other news of general interest to all Member Societies."

The Rev. Dr. John R. Temple, the late General Secretary of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, immediately began work on the preparation of the Bulletin to which he devoted much time, energy and thought. His sudden death in China brought the whole matter to a standstill, before all the preparatory work necessary for the launching of such a periodical was finished, and the publication of the Bulletin was postponed until after the 1949 meeting of the Council (a report of the Council meeting is given elsewhere in this Bulletin), when the decision was taken to split the proposed Journal into two. Consequently the U.B.S. is now publishing a quarterly journal called "The Bible Translator," which deals exclusively with translation problems and is intended for circulation mainly among translators actually at work, and this Bulletin which will also appear four times a year and is chiefly concerned with the publication of news and information on the work of the Bible Societies, on the problems related to their activity and on the findings of the Functional Groups set up by the U.B.S. Council.

But our Bulletin should also be the channel for contributions and discussions on the work of the Bible Societies and the many problems which they have to face, and to which different Societies often have very different lines of approach, and the Editor will be only too glad to receive any such contributions from those who bear the responsibility of circulating the written Word to the uttermost ends of the earth.

The Standing Committee of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES has been designated as Editorial Board of this Bulletin, with power to delegate its duties to a smaller group. The Standing Committee decided at its last meeting to remit its powers to a group of three, who are to help the Editor in the publication of the Bulletin. They are Miss M. S. Harrison (Secretary for Women's Work, B.F.B.S.), the Rev. Eric Fenn (Editorial Secretary, B.F.B.S.) and Dr. Francis C. Stifler (Secretary for Public Relations, A.B.S.). Other names may be added in the future, but it is a comfort for the Editor to know that he can count on the wise counsel of these experienced collaborators.

*

For this first issue we have thought it wise to give a general account of the U.B.S., its history and its last Council meeting ; the article by Dr. Rutgers on Indonesia shows how co-operation and fellowship, which are the basis of any U.B.S. activity, work out in practice in a particular area. News and information on Bible work throughout the world are, of course, the main substance of such a Bulletin ; they draw our attention to the activity of others and keep us in a closer spirit of fellowship with them. Travel reports have no other purpose than to make us all aware of the problems with which some of us are grappling.

But we are also called to look beyond the immediate sphere of our own activities and particular problems. There are matters of general interest which may have a bearing, although an indirect one, on the activity of the Bible Societies, and of which we need to be made aware. With this in view we have given space to such articles as those on the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the World Council of Churches and the Bible and also to news items not directly related to the work of the Bible Societies.

Although this quarterly magazine is going to be devoted mainly to " technical " information related in one way or another to Bible work, we do not want to forget that the Bible is the written Word of God and it is therefore our intention to show how the Holy Spirit is at work through the Bible in the life of individuals, of peoples, and of the Church. In this issue the Rev. Chandu Ray, who represented the Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon at the U.B.S. meeting in New York, tells us what the Bible has meant to him. His testimony leads us on to the call to worship and prayer with which we close this Bulletin.

*

It is in this spirit of prayer and devotion that the Bible Societies wish to fulfil their responsibility and to be supported by Christians all over the world, and there can be no better ending to this introduction to the U.B.S. Bulletin than to quote the closing words of the foreword which our President, Bishop Berggrav, had written for the first issue of the U.B.S. Journal on which the late Dr. Temple was working :

" I commend this Journal to my fellow-Christians throughout the world and hope that it will succeed in strengthening the bands which unite us in our common loyalty to God's Word, in encouraging its wider circulation and in leading to a clearer understanding of its message and relevancy for to-day."

THE UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

Eric M. North

THE Bible Society movement, which began in 1804 with the foundation of The British and Foreign Society, was in its early years marked by the formation of national Bible Societies in many countries, especially in Western Europe and in the United States. These were countries in which the population was predominantly Christian and in which the Bible was already greatly valued. In the years which followed, the formation of national societies of course did not continue so rapidly, and the expansion of Bible Society work into non-Christian lands was principally through the missionary activities of the British, the American, the Dutch and the Scottish Societies.

As the years passed and the work grew and expanded, the activities of these Societies abroad began to impinge upon each other and there were occasional conferences between one Society and another in the effort to meet the problems which arose. In consequence some adjustments in missionary territory were made, whereby, e.g. the British Society became responsible for Persia and the American Society for Mexico and Central America, or by which the British Society became responsible for Korea and the American Society for the Philippines. The existence of overlapping and, to some degree, competition between the Societies became so marked by the 1920's in China, that in 1932 a conference was held in London, representing the British, American and Scottish Societies, in which was forecast the uniting of the work of these three Societies in China, which took place a few years thereafter.

At the time of this conference there was held a conference of the staffs of these Societies, at which it was recognized that the Societies ought to move in the direction of uniting their work in fields where more than one Society was working, especially as that was a necessary preliminary to the development of national Bible Societies in the lands of the younger churches. At this staff conference also the Reverend Arthur H. Wilkinson proposed the resolution, which was adopted, looking forward to the ultimate formation of a council of such national Bible Societies.

During the years which followed, the work of the British and American Societies in the Near East, in Latin America, in Japan and in China was consolidated into joint agencies, supported by both Societies and administered by one or the other Society or by both in consultation. A similar development took place in the late '30's when the work of the British, the Dutch and the Scottish Societies in the Netherlands Indies was consolidated under the administration of the Netherlands Society. By the end of the recent war the Scottish Society had joined with the British and American Societies in the union of work in China.

In consequence of these measures several new national Bible Societies have come into being. In China the constitutional convention took place on the eve of the Chinese-Japanese war, and the full formation of the China Society has not yet taken place, although some of the features of a Society are in operation. The Japan Bible Society was formed in 1938. In 1948 the Bible Society of Brazil was formed. These Societies are in fulfilment of the policy and vision of 1932. In 1944 the Bible Society of India and Ceylon was formed, again expressive of the policy of the development of national Societies, although in this case not requiring the formation of a joint organisation, as the work had been so largely with the British Society. With

the war-time separation of the work in Korea from the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Korean Bible Society was formed to take over the responsibility and it so continues.

In 1939 an attempt was made to implement the formation of a council of Bible Societies by a conference held in the Netherlands at which the British, American, Scottish, Netherlands, Norwegian and French Bible Societies were represented. Articles of association and recommendation were presented, looking to the formation of a council. Four Societies approved these recommendations, but the outbreak of the war set aside the endeavour.

One of the consequences of the war in Europe was the destruction of the former self-sufficiency of the Bible Societies of the European continent, which had been self-sufficient in the countries where such Societies existed but which had taken little or no part in the production and distribution of the Scriptures for and in mission lands. Under the strong realisation that the Bible Societies all needed to be drawn together to face the overwhelming challenge of the new situation in which the contributions of all would be needed in the closest possible co-operation, the British Society commissioned one of its secretaries, the Rev. Dr. John R. Temple, to visit the European Societies and enlist them in a co-operative movement and endeavour, which was heartily endorsed by the American Society. The goal of a council of Bible Societies was equally kept in view.

As a result of this development, one of the earliest post-war conferences to be held was assembled in England in May 1946, at London and Haywards Heath, at which there were delegates from Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States, and official visitors from the World Council of Churches. At Haywards Heath a new draft of a Constitution was prepared and the foundations laid. During the following year sixteen national Bible Societies or Federations of local Bible Societies approved and joined the new body, which was entitled "UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES." The second meeting was held at Amersfoort, Holland, in June 1947. A third meeting took place in Dunblane, Scotland, in June 1948, with eighteen Societies represented. A fourth meeting was held in New York in June, 1949, at which additional Societies were admitted to membership, making the total number twenty-four.

The structure of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES has been somewhat altered since the beginning and now consists of a Council of one delegate from each National Society, together with a smaller Standing Committee, which serves as the *ad interim* body.

The functions of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES include : encouraging fellowship and mutual understanding, assisting in developing co-operation and in assembling and circulating information and the exchange of experience, interpreting the values and importance of Bible Society work in the world Church, safeguarding the freedom of circulation and use of the Scriptures, and encouraging the formation of national Societies.

This account of the formation of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES would not be complete without recognition that those participating in its formation were not impelled merely by organisational needs for a clearing house and an agency of consultation, but were also impelled by a deep awareness of the tremendous importance of the Bible in the winning of the world to Christ and in the formation and maintenance of the Church. The UNITED BIBLE

Societies thus is the expression not simply of the collaboration of national organisations, but it is an expression on an ecumenical scale of the significance of the position and use of the Bible for mankind. Their concentration upon the Book and its values for humanity gives the members of the United Bible Societies the deepest concern that they and their Council may render a profoundly spiritual service to the world-wide Church and to humanity.

THE GREENWICH CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

June, 1949

William C. Somerville

"THE answer to the world's problems is not a word but a deed." This striking phrase is taken from an address given recently in Scotland by Dr. Frank Laubach, the spearhead of the Christian forces dealing with the problem of adult-literacy. There are many words, many voices, echoing round the world at the present time; so many, in fact, that people are confused and do not know which to heed. The Christian answer to the world's problems can be worked out in terms of words, but will it be given a fair hearing? Other people are shouting louder, and their promises seem, on the surface, to be much more attractive. If, however, the Christian answer could be presented in terms of deeds, a very different situation would arise. The principle of love is far in advance of the principle of force. The reality of God must outweigh the best wisdom of the atheists. Cannot we work out our answer in terms of deeds? Cannot we show men and women the world over that Christianity is not just a fine dream, but an actual reality?

As I listened to Dr. Laubach's argument my mind went back to the conference of the United Bible Societies, which it had been my privilege to attend earlier in the year. Many different Christian conferences have been held within recent years, but I wonder if there have been many in which the accent was so firmly placed on deeds? I think every delegate, and every occasional listener to the discussions, went home with a clearer idea of some at least of the practical steps which it was God's will that he should take in order to help people of all lands to have access to the Bible. Bible Societies deal with words too, the Word of God, the Word which must inspire their every deed. Yet even the act of giving that Word to others is a deed which can capture the imagination, and which can prepare the way for the entrance of the Word that giveth light.

We heard afresh of the dearth of copies of the Scriptures in many different parts of the world. We heard of the new need caused by the spread of that same adult literacy in which Dr. Laubach has played so great a part. We heard of the challenge from materialism. But we heard too of the steps being taken by the Bible Societies to meet the world's need, and we laid plans so that our resources will be utilised to the full. Information and technical skill will be counted as the common property of all. The larger Societies will help the smaller ones, and the younger Societies will be encouraged and strengthened in the various areas which they serve.

The conference held in Dunblane (Scotland) in 1948 accomplished much. Along with still earlier conferences and discussions, Dunblane had already laid a fine foundation of mutual confidence and trust, and had produced many ideas and policies which Greenwich was to develop further. Yet I for one felt

that the results of our gathering in 1949 were more definite and purposeful than those achieved by earlier conferences. In one instance after another the work of earlier years crystallised into definite action. For example, at Dunblane we had planned a journal to serve as a means of exchanging ideas on different aspects of Bible Society work : at Greenwich we took steps to have two journals published straight away, the first to deal with problems of Bible translation, and the second to deal with all other matters of common interest. Again, at Dunblane we had discussed ways of exchanging information on the production of Bibles : at Greenwich we set up a " Functional Group " on production, and similar functional groups were set up on translation and on visual and audio aids.

It is only right to point out that Dunblane had already made great progress towards the realisation of some of these projects. But, most unfortunately, the death of our much-beloved General Secretary, Dr. Temple, intervened. His absence from our discussion left a gap hard to fill, and many tributes were paid to his memory.

In the past there had been another difficulty in that too much of the burden had been laid on the shoulders of the General Secretary. So at Greenwich we tried to spread the load. From now on, the conveners of the various functional groups will conduct much of the correspondence dealing with their own particular subjects, and the new General Secretary, M. Béguin, whom we welcomed most cordially, will have more time to attend to all the multifarious problems which are bound to arise as time goes on. M. Béguin has already had more than a foretaste of the kind of work he will be called to undertake and as Assistant Secretary for Europe has given much evidence of his ability and fine personal qualities.

An important factor in the success of the conference was the amount of preliminary work done by a number of people, most notably by Dr. Eric North. With the help of carefully prepared papers on such topics as " Basic Elements in the work of a National Bible Society ", " The Function and Work of the United Bible Societies ", " The Safeguarding of Editions of the Scriptures ", " Governmental Hindrances to the work of the Bible Societies ", " Principles and Methods of Securing Support ", and " The Bible Societies and the Promotion of the Use of the Bible ", it was not difficult to get to the heart of the various topics as they came up—always provided one was able to find one's way amid the multiplicity of sheets of paper which seemed to arrive from all quarters ! Another important report was the Officers' Report by M. Béguin, which was gradually expanded to include a summary of the achievements of the various member Societies during the previous year. It is not my object to record all that happened at Greenwich. That task is ably done in the official minutes. Yet the list of topics given here, and it is by no means exhaustive, may help those who were not fortunate enough to be at the conference to realise the extent of the ground covered.

There were many regrets that our Chairman, the Rt. Rev. Eivind Berggrav, Bishop of Oslo, was prevented from attending on account of ill-health. We greatly missed his inspiring leadership. We were very sorry too that Dr. North was unfit, and was only able to be with us occasionally. This was specially unfortunate as he had had so much to do with the planning of the conference, and we would naturally have wished to have him with us to take his full share in our discussions. We were fortunate, however, in those who deputised, both as Chairman and as hosts-in-chief. The Rev. A. H. Wilkinson made an excellent Chairman, and as hosts-in-chief we had a very happy partnership in Dr. Darlington and the Rev. Paul Collyer.

Anyone who has experienced the art of hospitality as practised in the United States of America will suspect that we were well looked after. Both during the preliminary meetings in New York, and during the less hectic but still very busy time at Seabury House, Greenwich, Connecticut, every possible thoughtful provision was made for our comfort. Only the weather might have been arranged better, and once or twice I found myself hankering after an Indian " punkah ", or even a cool Edinburgh east wind ! But evidently even the Americans haven't yet learned how to turn the sun on and off as required !

We were most fortunate too in the forethought given to the ancillary functions and gatherings arranged during our stay. It was a privilege to meet the American Bible Society staff, many of them gathered together for a conference of the Field and District Secretaries which ran parallel to our own. By a happy arrangement, unlike truly parallel lines, the two conferences met together more than once. On some of these occasions we were given the opportunity of seeing films and other promotional material in use by different Bible Societies, and in particular by the American Bible Society. Then there was the memorable symposium on " The Bible in Church and World To-day, " with addresses from several of the delegates and from Dr. Henry P. van Dusen. On the Sunday of our stay in New York many of us were privileged to occupy pulpits in New York churches, and took the opportunity to tell the various congregations something of the work of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES. In the afternoon we took part in a Public Assembly in Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. Members of different nationalities marched into the church in procession, and in front, round the pulpit, were stands displaying Bibles, Testaments and Portions in a great variety of languages and scripts. In the course of a special order of service two addresses were given, by the Rev. W. J. Platt of The British and Foreign Bible Society, and the Rev. Dr. John S. Bonnell, the minister of the church.

An interesting session at Seabury House was one in which delegates were addressed by the Rev. Dr. Henry Smith Leiper, Associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, the Rev. Dr. J. W. Decker, Secretary of the International Missionary Council, and the Rev. Dr. Forrest Knapp, General Secretary of the World Council of Christian Education. Each spoke of the work of his own Council and of the impact upon it of the work of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, and helped to emphasise the bigness of the task in which we are engaged. Another interesting guest speaker was Dr. Paul Anderson, who gave us all fresh insight into the thought and method of our materialistic competitors in the present-day world.

It was all good stuff, with the ever-present danger of mental indigestion through over-indulgence in such rich fare ! Fortunately we had our regular times of quiet and meditation, led by the Rev. W. H. Hudspeth ; and the closing Communion Service will long remain with us, as did the closing Communion Service in the Cathedral at Dunblane in 1948.

But after all, the things that will outlast the speeches and everything else are the new friendships made and the old friendships strengthened during our two weeks together. It was stressed more than once that the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES is a *Fellowship* : and a fellowship, if it is to be real, must rest securely on friendships between representative individuals. What a privilege it is to meet people from so many different parts of the globe ; to discuss problems of common interest ; and to realise that for the rest of our lives we shall have personal friends in this or that country ! How much better it is to do business with a person one has met, than with someone who

is known only as a signature ! If I mention one or two of my new friends by name it is only because they were those who had travelled farthest to join us in Greenwich—Mr. Williams of Australia, Mr. Khouw of Indonesia, Mr. Ray of Pakistan, Mr. Chapman of Africa, Mr. Im of Korea, Drs. Murata and Tsuru of Japan, Mr. Krischke of Brazil, and Dr. Turner of Argentina. With such a representation, plus many others from North America and from Europe, we could not but be conscious of our global task.

If the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES did nothing more than impress us with the bigness of our task it would be worthwhile. We were not only given an impression of bigness, however ; we were also enabled to plan how best to tackle the task laid upon us by God Himself ; for if we, the members of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, do not see to it that copies of His Word are made available to all men everywhere, there is no-one else who will. One of the underlying notes of the conference was that of urgency. Can the peoples of the world be brought to acknowledge the over-ruling laws of God in time to avert yet another war on a vaster scale than ever ? Being convinced that there is no other power great enough to provide nations with a common loyalty ; being convinced too that God's laws of truth, justice and brotherly love are set out in the Bible for all to see ; the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES believe that the wider circulation and the more careful study of the Bible are essential foundations for effective effort towards the establishment of goodwill among men and hence of lasting peace on earth.

Some little time ago another noted missionary, Miss Mildred Cable, spoke in Scotland of the task of the Bible Societies. She declared, " The Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ must unite us : the love of the Word of God must constrain us : and the sense of the need of men and women must drive us." So, realising that in face of the Cross we are all convicted of sin, yet also redeemed and called to follow Christ, may the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES strive to the utmost of their power to meet the world's need, and by their manner of meeting it, generously and quickly, demonstrate to a critical world that Christian love is a reality, with its springs in God Himself.

CO-OPERATION OF THE BIBLE SOCIETIES IN INDONESIA

HERMAN C. RUTGERS

FOR many years there was hardly any co-operation between the different Bible Societies. Each was doing his own work in his own field, and the world was large. Thus in Indonesia also there were three Bible Societies working, with hardly any contact between them. The provision of Bibles for an area spanning one eighth of the circumference of the globe, with nearly seventy million inhabitants speaking some one hundred and fifty different languages, was a big enough task to keep them fully employed.

But nearly fifteen years ago everyone became convinced that it was not good business to support, in the same area, two Bible Houses which were in different places, when one well equipped and centrally located Bible House could manage Bible distribution far more satisfactorily. Thus in 1936 discussions took place about the possibility of merging all Bible Society work in Indonesia, with the result that in 1937 the British and Foreign Bible Society, the National Bible Society of Scotland and the Netherlands Bible Society decided to unite their work in Indonesia. This was accomplished during a

visit to Indonesia of the General Secretary of the Netherlands Bible Society, and the joint work was centralised in the Bible House in Bandung under the direction of Dr. C. P. Cohen Stuart. During the following years this work developed steadily. Most of the new editions in the Indonesian languages were printed in Indonesia, and the annual sale went up to about 120,000 copies in fifty different languages.

Then came the Japanese invasion, which destroyed most of the work. Dr. Cohen Stuart died in a concentration camp, but the assistant secretary, Mr. G. P. Khouw, a Chinese law graduate from the University of Batavia, managed to keep the Bible House going, although there could not be any colportage and the annual sales dropped to about 25,000.

Immediately after the war the work started again, with Mr. Khouw in charge as successor to Dr. Cohen Stuart. The Bible House in Bandung was still requisitioned, but during the Japanese occupation the stock had been removed to another building. Transport difficulties made it necessary temporarily to move the Bible House to Makassar, Celebes, where the assistant secretary, Mr. R. van Holst Pellekaan, was in charge during the past year. During this year the Netherlands Bible Society bought a House in Batavia, which will henceforward be the centre of Bible work. Mr. Khouw has had his office here since August.

Financial arrangements for this joint work are at present as follows :— (*a*) the B.F.B.S. and the N.B.S. pay half each of the net cost of the Agency (about £3,000) ; (*b*) the N.B.S. pays the entire cost of the translation work (about £6,000) ; (*c*) all three Societies, the B.F.B.S., N.B.S.S. and N.B.S. pay for colportage, which at present—because of the political disturbances—cannot be developed as it was before the war. However, it is hoped that soon, when the political situation is definitely settled, colportage will be fully resumed.

Besides these three aspects of the work—administration, translation and distribution—there is in the fourth place production. There are about 2,000,000 Protestant Christians in Indonesia, speaking between them some twenty different languages in which the Bible, either entirely or in part, has already been translated. This means that every year new editions must be provided in several languages, because the old editions are out of stock. In addition, every year new translations or revisions are ready for publication. In 1938 an estimate was drawn up of what would be needed during the next ten years in order to provide the Indonesian Churches and missions with all the Scriptures they required. But since, in a good many cases, the buying capacity of the people is often insufficient for them to be able to pay even the cost price of books, account had to be taken of the fact that the Scriptures would be sold below production costs. On the basis of the experience of past years, it was estimated that there would be an annual deficit of £2,500, being the difference between total production costs and returns from sales. On this basis a decision was taken to create a Joint Indonesian Publication Fund, which would carry the cost of all paper, printing, binding and shipping, and which would receive the returns from sales. In addition the B.F.B.S. and the N.B.S. promised to pay each year £1,000 sterling, and the N.B.S.S. £500 sterling, so that the estimated deficit would be entirely met.

This Fund has now been working for eleven years, and if it had not been for the war it would have worked entirely as estimated. But during the war stocks were entirely depleted, and after the war the prices of paper and printing were about four-fold what they were formerly, so that the cost of

replacing the stocks was far higher than had been estimated. However, the buying capacity of the population in post-war currency had increased in a corresponding manner, so that far higher prices could be charged for the re-prints of Bibles and Testaments. Thus the problem created by the war was chiefly one of raising an additional sum of money, large enough to pay for the increased cost of replacing our stocks, and also to print the new editions necessary. Shortly after the war an estimate was made of what would be needed for this, and this came to about fl.500,000 which is equal to about £45,000 sterling. The B.F.B.S. and the N.B.S. each promised £20,000 towards this sum, and the N.B.S.S. agreed to meet the remainder.

Thus during the past two years a great many new editions have been provided. From 1st July, 1938, when the Fund was started, until 30th June, 1949, 298,268 copies were printed for a total cost of fl.274.659,48. The figure would have been much higher of course, if there had been no war and the consequent cessation of production for six years. Further, on 1st July, 1949, there were 271,000 copies in the press, at an approximate cost of fl.334.000 and it is estimated that during the next year additional orders for 210,000 copies, at an approximate cost of fl.258.000 will go to the press. Thus in all 779,268 copies will be provided, and this figure is made up of 34,250 Bibles, 290,765 Testaments and 454,253 Portions, for an approximate expenditure of fl.867.000—(about £81,000).

During the past few years sales have been gradually returning to the pre-war standard. Before the war the annual sale was well in the hundred thousand in about fifty different languages. During the war years the sales dropped to an average of twenty-five thousand. The political trouble immediately after the war made 1946 the worst year we have had, but since then figures have gone up again. During the last four years they were :

	Bibles	*Testaments*	*Portions*	*Total*
1945 ...	102	2,121	19,907	22,130
1946 ...	87	691	5,897	6,675
1947 ...	667	9,617	20,473	30,757
1948 ...	2,387	25,622	21,999	50,008

The estimate for 1949 indicates a total of about 75,000, and the expectation is that in 1950, sales will again reach the pre-war figure of over 100,000. The remarkable thing in the figures for 1948, is that there were more complete New Testaments sold than Portions, for this is a thing which has never happened before.

With regard to the low figure for complete Bibles sold, it should be remembered that most of the Indonesian languages have no complete Bible yet in one volume, but usually in two, and sometimes even in three volumes. The figure for Testaments includes not only the New but also the Old, and therefore although in most languages the statistics do not show any figures for complete Bibles, as the Testaments include both Old and New, this constitutes a Bible.

The ' black market ' prices of the last few years indicated what a need there was for Bibles. In some languages the prices went up to forty shillings for a New Testament, and sixty shillings for an Old Testament—about eight times more than the Bible Society prices. It is expected that, when the editions which are now in the press have arrived in Indonesia, these ' black market ' prices will disappear and Bibles and New Testaments will be available everywhere at the normal Bible Society prices.

NEWS FROM ALL THE WORLD

Under this heading we do not intend to give only information on the Bible Societies, but we also want to include such facts as may or should have a bearing on Bible Society work. This information should therefore not only tell us what other Societies are doing, but should also help us to apprehend the whole realm of our common responsibilities and should lead us to think out how best we may extend our own activity in the future, in such a way as to fulfil our calling to the utmost.

Argentina

ON 28th July, 1949, in Buenos Aires, a group of ministers and laymen representing eleven denominations formed the new *Advisory Council of Argentina*, electing the Rev. Santiago Canclini, pastor of Buenos Aires' leading Baptist Church, as President. This Council has been formed to facilitate co-operation in that area with the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES.

*

Pastor Marc Boegner, who has been visiting South American Churches in the name of the World Council of Churches, reported at a meeting of the *Alliance Biblique Française* how glad he had been to meet the representatives of several Bible agencies, and to attend a meeting of the newly formed Advisory Council of the Bible Society agency in Argentina. Bible work, he said, is very difficult in those countries where there is much opposition. However, a minority among the Catholics seems to be developing an active interest in the study of the Bible.

Australia

The Rev. W. H. Rainey is due to retire from the Secretaryship of the *Council of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Australia* early in 1951. The Rev. H. M. Arrowsmith, Rector of St. John's, Toorak, Melbourne, has now been appointed by the London Committee, on the recommendation of the Commonwealth Council, to succeed Mr. Rainey and to begin his work on 1st January, 1950. This will give Mr. Arrowsmith over a year before he has sole responsibility for the Australian Council. Mr. Arrowsmith is going to visit the Bible Societies in Canada, the United States and Great Britain early in 1950.

*

Australia is the first U.N.O. member to appoint a clergyman as permanent adviser to its delegation.

Austria

The *Austrian Bible Committee* held its Annual Meeting in Vienna on 18th September, and about 800 people were present in a Lutheran church. The number of churches observing Bible Sunday in Austria has greatly increased and the co-operation between the churches is very satisfactory indeed.

*

It is estimated that in 1948 over two million people attended services in the Protestant churches in Austria. In 1945 the number was reckoned at about 984,000.

Belgium

The *Belgian Bible Society* now has seven full time and three voluntary colporteurs. Three of the seven are working in the French-speaking part of Belgium and four in the Flemish area. The salaries of three of these colporteurs are paid almost entirely by the British and Foreign Bible Society and two of them are completely supported by the National Bible Society of Scotland. The Belgian Bible Society completes the salaries of the three colporteurs paid by the British and Foreign Bible Society, covers all the expenses of one colporteur and shares 50-50 with the Methodist Mission in Belgium the expenses of the seventh. The British and Foreign Bible Society has made a token grant for an Italian colporteur who will soon begin work among the Italian-speaking miners.

Voluntary colportage is to be extended. 150 persons have offered to keep a small stock of Scriptures in their homes and to display a poster at the window, bearing the words : " Read the Bible—on sale here."

Pastor Harts, Secretary of the Belgian Bible Society reports :

" Colportage remains in the foreground of our thinking, and we shall be very thankful for any help which other Bible Societies may give us for that aspect of our work. We plan to associate closely with all the churches and Protestant organisations in Belgium for the extension of colportage. However, the field is so large that the number of colporteurs might easily be doubled without any danger of overlapping.

" We need very badly a colportage van for work in the provinces. This is especially needed for visits to the big markets in the country, which are occasions when very large crowds of people come together. Evangelistic work at these markets is actually one of the most effective methods of colportage."

*

The Royal Library in Belgium has ordered copies of Scriptures in many foreign languages, after having been contacted by the Belgian Bible Society.

*

Pastor Visser, Home Secretary of the Netherlands Bible Society, has toured the Flemish part of Belgium for 20 days with the film of the Netherlands Bible Society : " No more Frontiers." About 3,000 people have seen the film and 300 have asked to become members of the Belgian Bible Society.

■

The office of the Belgian Bible Society has been moved from Rue du Champ-de-Mars to 26 Rue du Commerce, where more room was available.

*

An evangelist belonging to the Christian Missionary Church in Belgium has founded a group called ' Volunteers for Evangelisation,' and has started evangelistic work in a certain section of Belgium. Here are two extracts from a News Sheet they publish, called " The Good News for All ! " :—

"Andenne, a small town on the Meuse with 8,000 inhabitants, is an important industrial centre. There are factories and spinning and paper mills, but although this city is next to the town of Seilles, where we have one of our Protestant churches, there is not one Protestant family in Andenne, and Protestantism is almost unknown. We do not know the reason for this unusual situation.

" The ' Volunteers ' went to that town one boiling hot day, going through the streets singing, preaching, distributing tracts, presenting the Holy Scriptures, and inviting the population to a meeting in the evening in the Town Hall. At this meeting they found a good many open-minded people

who listened to the message with great attention, and who were ready to enter into discussion. On the same evening about 100 Gospels, and 20 New Testaments were sold. There were about 20 foreigners in the audience, who had come from various parts of the town, and many people inquired where the Protestant church was to be found. We hear now that in this town of Andenne things have been set into motion : six new people have come to the church already, and others have promised to come. Several others have been visited, and appear to have been won to the Gospel.

" Until the end of last July the ' Volunteers ' have held six ' Evangelisation Days ' and they sold on these occasions 614 Gospels, 80 New Testaments, and 2 Bibles."

Brazil

The following information is extracted from an article prepared by the General Secretary of the Bible Society of Brazil, the Rev. E. Machado Krischke, under the title " Triumphant Beginning " which, for lack of space, cannot be reproduced in full :

" It was during the course of 1948 that the evangelical forces in Brazil, with the hearty co-operation of the American and the British and Foreign Bible Societies achieved one of their greatest ideals, the organisation of the Bible Society of Brazil, the first autonomous Society in South America . . . . . Our Society enjoys the close co-operation of the American Bible Society, as well as of the British and Foreign Bible Society from whom the greater part of our financial assistance is received for the development of the work. Both the British and the American Societies maintain co-operating Secretaries at the Bible House in Rio de Janeiro, who work in close harmony with the Executive Secretary and the Board of the national Society."

On its first birthday anniversary last June, the Society was able to give the following circulation figures :

Bibles ...	84,306	Total, 1,479,224
Testaments...	107,110	
Portions ...	1,287,808	

(The total circulation for the years 1942-1947 inclusive was 6,119,180.)

Contributions and membership fees amounted to approximately Cr.$315,000.00 in local currency, as compared with Cr.$41,000.00 which was the record total received by the Joint Agency in 1947.

Seven Regional Auxiliary Committees have been organised in various parts of the country during the year, while more than 7,000 people have become members of the Society.

The Society publishes a quarterly magazine : "A Biblia no Brasil."

*

The Rev. E. Machado Krischke has been elected Bishop of South Western Brazil and has resigned from the Secretaryship of the Bible Society of Brazil. His resignation will take effect from 1st February, 1950.

China

The day of the great typhoon in China last summer coincided with the highest tide of the year. Toward dawn Secretary Mortensen's residence telephone rang. It was the night watchman at the Shanghai Bible House. He reported that the water was two feet high in the salesroom and rising. Dr. Mortensen, finding conditions unfavourable to use his car, started to walk

the five miles from his house to the Bible House in water ranging from a depth of two inches to two-and-a-half feet. The damage to the Scripture stocks at the Bible House was estimated at $17,000.

*

In a telegram to the New York Bible House, dated Shanghai 20th September, Dr. Mortensen reports that shipping is improving with the impending liberation and that the China blockade is losing effectiveness ; that the Shanghai Post Office had already accepted 300 book parcels and that Customs had cleared packages from Hongkong, Manila, Bangkok, Singapore, New York and London.

A letter from the *China Bible House* dated September 26th and addressed to the U.B.S. headquarters adds :

"As more cities in this country are getting ' liberated,' our opportunities of Bible distribution have been concurrently improved. Our post office is now in a position to accept parcels to all parts in the liberated areas, and letters even to those cities in the other areas."

Czechoslovakia

Up to the end of September the Bible Society in Prague had circulated 55,000 copies of the Scriptures this year.

*

During the past twelve months, the Czechoslovak Church which had hitherto purchased practically no Scriptures from the Bible Society, has taken 7,000 Bibles and 7,000 New Testaments. They are distributing these among their young people.

*

The conference of " Evangeliske Dilo," a Czech Brethren Church movement specialised in winning and educating laymen for more intensive work in the Church and in public life, has published a directive which stated among other things : " The times we are in are, and will long remain serious. We must do everything possible to ensure that all members of our local congregations increase their knowledge of what the Church is, and what is its mission. For this it is necessary that all the members, parish boards and community representatives, youth leaders, Sunday School workers, teachers of religion, workers in women's circles and other workers in the Vineyard of the Lord should undergo an intensive and systematic training in the knowledge of the Bible, of Christian Faith and of the organisation of the Church."

Denmark

The Annual Report of the *Danish Bible Society* for 1948 has just been published. The following is a report of the work of the Society for the period from the summer of 1948 to the summer of 1949, written by Pastor Seidelin :

" In our last annual report we could state that under the 15th June, 1948, the King of Denmark had authorised our new translation of the New Testament.

"Since then we have published a new translation in an 8vo New Testament and 8vo Bible in a lettering suitable for people of mature age. Then followed the New Testament for children in Sunday Schools and young people preparing for confirmation, and before the end of the year we shall be able to send out a Pocket Bible with the text printed as in an ordinary book. Another Pocket Bible is to follow with division in verses as in the old editions. Our next

edition will be the whole Bible printed in a type big enough to enable elderly people to use it ; and furthermore we have planned the publishing of the New Testament in minuscules pursuant to a new provision made by our Minister of Education. Hitherto we have written all nouns with capital letters like the Germans.

"From 1st January to 31st December, 1948, we distributed 57,547 Holy Scriptures, which is 7,065 less than in the previous year ; we think that the reason of this is that everyone knows that the new translation of the New Testament can be expected soon, and so people have hesitated to buy. Since the foundation of this Society we have distributed 3,892,661 copies of Holy Scripture.

" The new theological students get as a present Nestlé's Greek and Kittel's Hebrew Testament ; moreover, we give the new translation of the New Testament to all theological students in this country. All clergymen in Denmark can obtain New Testaments and Bibles for young people preparing for confirmation, or for parishioners in strained circumstances, at very reduced prices or quite free of charge. We help the blind with contributions of money to have the whole of the Holy Bible printed in Braille, and in the same way we assist a new agency for the propagation of Christian material, and another society for publishing edifying books.

" Of commentaries to the Bible we have published those for the whole of the New Testament and for the poetical and prophetic books of the Old Testament. Commentaries to the historical books of the Old Testament too are to follow soon. Another society will publish commentaries of edifying contents to the whole Bible, and still another society will send out comments on parts of the Old Testament and the whole of the New Testament, mainly however in the form of annotations.

" Our accounts : our financial year runs from 1st January to 31st December. In 1948 the collection on the New Year's Day in all churches in Denmark totalled Kr. 103,720 (1 Kr. is equal to 1 shilling) ; our sale of the Holy Scriptures amounts to Kr. 237,854. Among items of expenditure we must mention: paper Kr. 73,495 ; printing Kr. 91,385 and book-binding Kr. 137,716.

"I have formerly informed all affiliated Societies of the U.B.S. of the news that our old President and Chairman, the Most Rev. Archdean C. Skovgaard-Petersen has retired, and that His Excellency Th. Frølund, President of the Supreme Court was elected as President and Chairman in his place."

England

Up to the middle of October, the *British and Foreign Bible Society* has produced this year 1,107,129 Bibles in Great Britain. Such a quantity has never before been equalled in such time.

In the same period 1,432,069 Testaments and Portions were also produced. These editions cover about 50 languages.

Paper has been sent from London to Burma, Ceylon, China, Hungary, India and the Middle East. Scriptures are also printed by the B.F.B.S. in the Belgian Congo, Italy, Portugal, Rhodesia, and South Africa.

*

The B.F.B.S. has just issued a series of six (4 page) leaflets under the title " Women and the Book." They all deal with the increasingly important role played by women in the life of such countries as China, Burma, Pakistan,

Iran, and West and Central Africa, and with the necessity of adequate Scripture supplies being available for all future missionary work in these countries.

*

The 4th December was Bible Sunday in England, and for that occasion this year the B.F.B.S. published a leaflet which not only gave some general information about Bible distribution throughout the world, but also offered to preachers two outlines for sermons about the Bible, prepared by the Rev. Eric Fenn, one based on St. Luke XV 3-7 (the parable of the lost sheep), and the other based on Isaiah LV 10-11 (the power of the Word of God).

*

The King and Queen, who are Patrons of the B.F.B.S., paid a visit to the Bible House in London early in December.

*

A new modern translation of the Bible into Basic English has just been published by the Cambridge University Press. It has been made from the original texts by Prof. H. Hooke who had already published the New Testament in Basic English in 1941. Basic English consists of only 850 words, but owing to the exceptional vocabulary, it has been extended to 1,000 words in the case of the translation of the Bible.

France

At its last meeting, the Committee of the *Alliance Biblique Française* (A.B.F.) examined and adopted a plan for the development of Bible work in France. It had been felt that Bible distribution might be strengthened and extended and Mr. Haig, Secretary for Europe of the B.F.B.S., together with the General Secretary of the U.B.S., paid a visit to France in order to discuss the question with the Chairman and Secretary of the A.B.F. After having received full approval from the Committee of the A.B.F., the proposals were, in turn, accepted by the General Committee of the B.F.B.S., which will bear the financial responsibility for this scheme.

Mr. Blumenthal, agent of the B.F.B.S. in Paris, and at the same time Secretary-Treasurer of the A.B.F., will take full responsibility, under the auspices of the A.B.F., for organising Bible distribution work in France by means of colporteurs (both paid and voluntary), Bible campaigns in co-operation with the local churches, and by visiting markets and fairs with a colportage van. The purchase of a van, the appointment of colporteurs and clerical help for Mr. Blumenthal and the reinforcement of means of publicity, are the immediate practical aspects of the plan to be carried out.

*

At the same meeting, the *Société Biblique de France* presented a first copy of its new 16mo Bible. This is the first Bible of that type to be printed in France since the war, and the text is that of the latest revision completed in 1940.

This Society is also printing an 18mo Testament and Psalms, and an 8mo Bible (both Synodale version) with paper purchased with the aid of the American Bible Society.

The *Société Biblique de Paris* is planning to print a Segond-Oltramarre Bible on paper purchased in the same way.

The last consignment of Synodale Bibles printed in Lausanne (Switzerland) with funds provided by the *Société Biblique Auxiliaire du Canton de Vaud*, on paper given by the A.B.S., reached Paris in the autumn.

*

General confessional statistics drawn up after the war in France state that the large majority of the French people do not show any interest in Church life. 35 million people have lost touch with any church, 6 million keep contact with the Roman Catholic Church, 1 million with Protestant churches.

Mr. Blumenthal comments on this : " It is unfortunately true that these figures are even very optimistic. The late Cardinal Suhard told Pastor Boegner that the proportion of true Catholics, i.e. those who at least communicate once a year, would not be more than 7% to 8% in the towns, and slightly more in the country. The new Archbishop of Paris, Mgr. Feltin, who succeeded Mgr. Suhard, has recognised that in his diocese of Paris not more than 500,000 Roman Catholics communicate at least once a year, and a further 200,000 are married or buried in church. Active Protestants in Paris number about 50,000, and it is thus possible to say that out of a population of over 5,000,000 not more than 750,000 can claim to belong to a Christian Church."

The workers in particular have lost all contact. The priest in a popular parish of 40,000 souls has tried to find twelve manual workers who would also be called " good Christians." He has not been able to find them.

*

On the occasion of the National Synod of the French Reformed Church last June, the Rev. Jean-Paul Benoit presented a report under the title "Approach to the World." In this report Pastor Benoit stresses the necessity of the Church finding new ways of approach in a world in which Christ is becoming less and less known, and of finding ways by which the message can be brought to the masses, to whom the Church is becoming unknown.

Pastor Benoit underlines three central aspects of this approach :—

The importance of the ministry ;

The necessity for the evangelist to become interested in the problems of those he wants to convert ;

and the following :—

"At a time when so many of our evangelists, even among the most active, are stressing on every occasion the necessity for a testimony of life, of daily fidelity in family and work, of spreading love, and the necessity of putting the whole of man and his relationships under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, I feel obliged to recall here, even in the surroundings of contemporary paganism, the urgency of emphasising that which is the message of the evangelist to-day. The Churches of the Reformation have always been concerned with the translation of the Gospel into the languages of non-believers, and language does not mean only the words, but also the conceptions and ways of thinking of man, the requirements as well as the weaknesses of his mind and heart, the structure of his being as well as of the world he is living in. More than by any other method, we must see the urgency for this translation—modern, but faithful to the written Word, always related to the present supreme reality of Jesus Christ, the Living Word, and a translation in the common idiom of the Eternal Divine Love, of the announcement of the great event : Christ, Saviour of the world."

Germany

In a circular letter from the *Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt* (P.W.B.) of Stuttgart, addressed in September to the German Bible Societies who buy their Scriptures from Stuttgart, we find the following information :

"A milestone on the way of our forward march is that we have been able to rebuild our printing house, which had been destroyed by bombing. As a

matter of fact, only the first floor is in working condition yet. Another important step has been the installation of two new rapid presses, one of which was a gift from the American Bible Society to the *Verband der Evangelischen Bibelgesellschaften in Deutschland* (Federation of German Bible Societies). The following figures show clearly the development of our work since the end of the war.

We have printed	*Bibles*	*N.T.'s*	*Portions*	*Scriptures for the Blind*
1.7.1945-30.6.1946 ...	10,349	75,745	198,030	—
1.7.1946-30.6.1947 ...	10,811	212,990	284,027	500
1.7.1947-30.6.1948 ...	94,568	248,168	29,467	750
1.7.1948-30.6.1949 ...	174,461	113,545	37,703	600
Total	290,189	650,448	549,227	1,850

"Under Portions are also reckoned school Bibles and family Bibles, which do not offer the complete text of the Scriptures.

"It was a great help to be able to have first from the Hilfswerk and then from the Federation of German Bible Societies, paper and binding material which had been supplied by the American Bible Society.

"Our critical editions are in great demand abroad, and we are preparing the fifth edition of our Kittel Hebrew Bible, as the fourth edition is already out of print. We intend to print a sixth edition at the beginning of next year, but for that edition the text of the critical notes will be revised.

"It was also a great joy for us when the authorities of Bremen decided to introduce our School Bible (an expurgated Bible) into the schools of the town, and ordered 19,500 copies for this purpose.

"Our plan is to print, in addition to the usual editons of the Luther Bible, a new edition of the Menge Bible, in its last revision by Professor Menge, and also the first section of the so-called "Stuttgarter Bilderbibel" (Stuttgart picture Bible) with coloured illustrations by Professor D. Rudolf Schäfer. We are also glad to be able to start thinking about editions for the mission field, and in connection with this we hope to work in growing co-operation with the other members of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES."

*

In a letter written early in December, Director Diehl of the P.W.B. reports :—

"It is a great joy to be able to tell you that we have just finished printing the 11th edition of the Menge Bible. The Menge Bible is—and I say this in all modesty—the best German translation of the Bible. Hermann Menge worked on his translation for 20 years ; on his 85th birthday he was able to put his finished manuscript into our hands, but even then—like Luther before him—he did not regard his work as final, but worked for years, improving upon it. And when I visited him in Goslar a few months before his death—he died on 8th January, 1939 in his 97th year—he handed over to me his last and final version of his text, and I promised to do everything possible to continue to make this Bible available to our people. The war and the difficult post-war years made it impossible for us to carry out this bequest of Menge and forced us to keep on postponing the printing of the new edition. But now it has been given to us to bring out this Bible ; if I may say so, it represents the "*textus receptus*" of the Menge Bible."

■

The *Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft zu Berlin* (E.H.B.) has just issued the first Bible printed in Eastern Germany since the end of the war. Two editions are being published at the same time on paper made in Eastern Germany from cellulose provided early this year by the Swedish and the American Bible Societies. The one edition is a photo-copy edition of a Bible published before the war by the E.H.B.; the other has been done on plates given by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The equivalent of 267 three-pound loaves of bread, is the price a German theological student in the Eastern zone has to pay if he wishes to buy a copy of the Kittel Hebrew Bible, which is at present available in West Berlin only. The *Verband* is going to provide some 600 copies of the Kittel Bible for Eastern Germany, but it is doubtful whether this will offer a sufficiently large supply.

The new translation of the New Testament by Friedrich Pfäfflein has been reprinted in the Eugen Salzer Verlag in Heilbronn. This translation has been done in modern German.

In connection with the Jubilee of the Gutenberg Bible, Prelate Schlatter, Chairman of the P.W.B., has sent the following information to the U.B.S. headquarters :

" The Jubilee of the Gutenberg Bible plays a part in the plans of the U.B.S. for the coming years, but it was not possible in Greenwich to determine exactly the year in which the Jubilee of the first printing of the Gutenberg Bible falls. An enquiry addressed to the director of the Gutenberg museum in Mainz has shown that Gutenberg made the type of his Bible in 42 lines in the years 1450-1452 and that the setting up and printing followed in the years 1452-1455 ; it is supposed that the work was completed by the end of 1455. In the copy which is now in the National Library in Paris, Vikar Cremer of St. Stefan in Mainz announces in August, 1456, that he has completed the illumination and binding of the work. A meeting of the U.B.S. in connection with the 500 years' Jubilee of the Gutenberg Bible would not therefore come into question until 1955 at the earliest."

On the invitation of the British Religious Affairs Branch, Bishop C. W. Noack of Denmark spent two weeks in Germany early in December, representing the United Bible Societies. During his stay, Bishop Noack visited several German Bible Societies and also met a number of German Church leaders. He spent some time in Hanover with Pastor Bode, the chairman of the *Verband der Evangelischen Bibelgesellschaften in Deutschland.*

*

During the last twelve months, eighteen series of magazines of a pornographical nature have been circulated in Western Germany in over 10 million copies. 5.4 million DM have been spent by the population on purchasing them. Each issue of these magazines runs to 150,000-200,000 copies.

Some figures about refugees : About 7.4 million people in Western Germany, 14.8% of the population, are German refugees, among whom nearly half a million are unemployed. To these figures should be added 1.5 million people evacuated from their home district during the war and about 1 million who have fled from Eastern Germany, bringing the total number of homeless people in Western Germany to one-fifth of the total population.

What a responsibility and task for the German Bible Societies and the German churches !

■

At the conference organised in Hamburg last spring by the Refugee Division of the World Council of Churches with representatives of the German and Allied authorities, Prof. H. J. Iwand of Göttingen spoke about the religious situation of the refugees. He began his address as follows :

" The distress of millions of refugees, who have passed through unimaginable horrors and have found no new home, is itself so eloquent that it is almost impossible to find a good interpreter of all this misery. In addition there is the question of the religious situation in the midst of this horror. He only can judge aright, who sees, even behind most bitter blasphemies, the true quest for God, who does not employ the standards of a more or less sheltered existence, but who understands how well nigh unfathomable are the depths of temptation which face a man without home and possessions. But amid these horrible experiences one is suddenly confronted by testimonies of unbroken faith, by deeds of noblest humanity, which are as far beyond our normal Christian experience as the temptations which they meet are beyond those which we are called upon to face. Heights and depths are reached here, unimaginable for our normal church life, but which bring us face to face with the standards of the Bible itself.

"Some time ago I met some Christians who had lived for three years under the Russian rule in Königsberg. They had lived to see how 76,000 out of the 110,000 inhabitants of their town had died from starvation. I cannot go into detail, but hunger and utter lawlessness broke down all standards of civilisation ; there were even cases of cannibalism. ' In this situation,' I was told by those men and women, who had been miraculously spared, and whose sufferings had purified them, ' we could read no other book but the Bible.' If therefore one word before all others must be said about the religious situation of the refugees, it is this, that these are the people in our modern civilisation who know how to read the Bible as an up-to-date book, written for them, and who are able to see God's light here and nowhere else, able to find His comfort only here."

*

A circular addressed by the Minister of Culture in Thuringia (Russian zone) to all school authorities, on 5th November, 1949, reads :

" For all progressive people it is an absolute mockery that in the present day there are still schools in existence where the walls are decorated with religious verses or pictures. It is too much to ask a progressive, socialistic person to move about beneath this trash. The Ministry of Culture therefore proposes that such trash should be replaced by valuable sayings of great socialist politicians or by their portraits. Every progressive teacher must have the ambition to strip his classrooms of all these religious trifles so that he can decorate the walls with pictures of our great politicians such as Stalin, Lenin and Pieck."

■

In Saxony (Russian zone) on the other hand, the Ministry for the Education of the People has opposed the idea that religious instruction can only be given after school hours. It has also denied that religious instruction is forbidden in the Upper Schools. Finally, it has been emphasised that the Ministry has intervened and will continue to do so, in all cases which come to its notice of contempt being poured on Christianity by teachers during the school lessons.

■

Bishop Dibelius, Evangelical Bishop of Berlin and chairman of the Evangelical Church in Germany, expressed the view at a press conference in Munich that relationships between the Church and Russian occupation authorities in Eastern Germany had constantly remained correct. The difficulties which the Church had to face in some cases had been caused up to the present by " subordinate organs."

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The following is extracted from an account of the Laymen's Conference held at Hanover during the summer, when Dr. Visser 't Hooft spoke under the title " Whither, Europe ? " :—

"In a world in which politics are dominant, we need an unshakable basis in order to be able to see political matters in the right perspective ; for politics are useful, but they never have the last word. The best that Governments can do is to free themselves from ideologies to which they give the value of eternity. At the present time ideological life is taking the place of spiritual life. The great vacuum which they have to fill can only really be filled by the Gospel ; we need to see that Europe can only live if she once again discovers her own way, and if she learns that this way is not one of the old ways nor the way of the great ideologies. In the message of the Lord before Whom all things will be put in their right place, and before Whom politics will become humble servants, the Christian Church bears a tremendous responsibility in this hour of European history. It is a question of life and death whether she will come out of her troubled isolation, whether she will escape being a ' back-number,' and will be able to undertake her apostleship among the masses who have no shepherd. The sign of real life in the European Churches, especially during the war, is the return to the Bible as the source of all new knowledge. The great movement in theology is a ground for healing, but by no means the complete answer of the Church to the call of God. The misled desperate masses demand very much more. They demand not only the renewal of the Church in herself, but also the turning of the Church to the world—a turning which in its capability to preach the Gospel must compare with the great movement of foreign missions in the 19th century."

Hungary

All Churches which are members of the World Council of Churches are going to organise joint Bible weeks each year for the furtherance of the mighty work of propagating the Hungarian Bible.

*

Ministers of the Reformed Church in Debrecen (Hungary) have formed a community of fellow workers in order to be able to serve the Lord and their Church by common Bible studies, by more profound theological studies and by the inspiration of a closer spiritual fellowship. A Bible course for elders has also been organised by the Church in that district.

*

The Hungarian Reformed Church is organising Bible courses in relation to her evangelistic campaign. A complete course will extend over 80 lessons in three weeks. More than 100 voluntary leaders have taken an introductory course followed by an examination. 24 such Bible courses are now being organised all over the country.

India

Mr. P. Mahanty, former Principal of St. Paul's College, Calcutta, has been appointed General Secretary of the *Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*. Mr. Mahanty represented this Society at the U.B.S. Conference in Amersfoort, in 1947.

*

The Indian Parliament has ended a bitter controversy by deciding that Hindi in Devanagri script with international numerals will be the official language of the Indian Union, and will replace English within fifteen years. (London newspapers, 15th September.)

Roman script can be phonetically adapted in all the languages of India. In Hindustani it takes only half as much paper to print the hymn book in Roman letters as is required for the Devanagri script. In the South Indian languages at least one-tenth less paper is required, and a fourth less labour and time. It has been proved from experience that Roman Tamil can be learned in one-tenth of the time and expense required for the old script. (Information given early in 1949 in a British missionary magazine.)

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" One problem about which I want to ask for your prayers is the desperate shortage of Telegu Bibles and New Testaments. Due partly to the great scarcity of paper which has persisted since the early days of the war, and partly to the lengthy process of printing the Scriptures, the shortage of Bibles is growing ever more acute. During the last two years, for instance, we have been able to obtain only 100 Telegu Bibles for distribution in this diocese among a Christian community of nearly 140,000 people ! Even with the greatest care, the ravages of white ants and other insects in the mud and thatch houses of our people, will not allow a lenthy life to any book. In this diocese alone, the scarcity of Bibles is such that we could find immediate sale for 20,000 without any difficulty. Many Christian families have been forced to do without them for several years. In addition to this great need of our Christian people, we are constantly besieged by Hindus who wish to buy copies of the Scriptures. Alas, there seems no immediate hope of meeting more than a fraction of their great need." (Extract from a letter published in the Magazine of the Church Missionary Society.)

The first copy of the complete Tibetan Bible has reached Kalimpong. A special service was held and the book itself, which is a very large one, weighing about five and a half pounds, covered with silk, was borne in procession into the church. The Rev. Tharchin, a Tibetan pastor, conducted the service, reading selected passages from the book.

Japan

Plans have been made for the circulation of 3 million copies of the Scriptures in 1950 : 35,000 Bibles ; 780,000 New Testaments ; 1,970,000 Portions ; 5,000 Braille portions ; 20,000 English Scriptures. It is planned to increase the circulation to 5 million copies in 1951.

*

The revision of the Old Testament is progressing : the Psalms, Job, the Minor Prophets, Ruth, Lamentations, Judges and I Samuel have been completed ; Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, II Samuel, I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ezekiel and Daniel are ready for examination by the Revision Committee which meets twice a week. The Psalms and Job are now being printed.

At the end of October the Rev. Dr. E. M. North, Chairman of the Council of the U.B.S., left New York by air for a three weeks' visit to Japan, in order to help the *Japan Bible Society* to adjust its programme to the ever-expanding demand for supplying Scriptures to the people of Japan. The recently appointed General Secretary of the Japan Bible Society is Mr. T. Miyakoda.

Korea

The *Korean Bible Society* has recently issued a leaflet which gives, in addition to a catalogue of Scriptures available, a number of suggestions to all interested in Bible distribution. The leaflet particularly stresses the importance of colportage and all pioneering work which should be done mainly by voluntary teams. About supplies we read (and this is meant as an encouragement for missionary action) : " Do not believe anyone who tells you there is a shortage of Scriptures in Korea. Ask to be allowed to look into our warehouse and cellars where you will see an abundance of Bibles, Testaments and Gospels, piled ceiling high. Now we await your orders."

The 1949 Bible Sunday was celebrated on the second Sunday in December ; the leaflet was circulated for that occasion.

The Korean Bible Society works in co-operation with the A.B.S., the B.F.B.S. and the N.B.S.S.

Netherlands

Dr. H. C. Rutgers, the General Secretary of the *Netherlands Bible Society*, is retiring during the course of 1950. He will be succeeded by Baron Van Tuyll Van Serooskerken who is at present Director of the Netherlands Reconstruction Committee.

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On May 31st, 1947, a census was taken in Holland. Statistics of 1930 showed an enormous drift from membership of the churches. The figures of the recent census confirm the process, which has been going on since 1930, though the downward trend is in some degree delayed. The Netherlands Reformed Church shows an increase in membership of 9.2%, but in view of the increase in population (21.3%), it means a decline.

In 1930 the Netherlands Reformed Church comprised 34.5% of the whole population, in 1947, 31.03%.

The group of those who do not belong to any Church rose from 14.3% to 17.04%.

The Gereformeerde Churches formed in 1930, 8.04% of the population. Together with the group which separated from these Churches some years ago, the percentage is now 7.93%. Considering the high birth rate in these Churches this means a rather sharp decline. The Lutheran Churches show the greatest decline, which may be explained from the fact that the German members left this country after the war.

During the German occupation the Jews were for the greater part exterminated.

In 1930 the percentage was 1.41, now it is 0.15 . . . . .

The Roman Catholic Church shows a definite increase in membership, owing to the high birth rate. In 1930, 36.42%, in 1947, 38.50%.

In a population of 9.6 million there are now in Holland 3.7 million Roman Catholics and 4.3 million Protestants. In 1930 these numbers were 2.8 and 3.9 million on a population of 7.9 million.

Norway

During the last two years the Norwegian Bible Society has circulated as many Lapp Bibles as during the previous 20 years. This was due to the fact

that most of the people living in Finnmark lost all their belongings when German armies, retreating from Finland at the end of the war, completely razed the country.

The Norwegian Bible Society has set aside 100,000 Kr. for the purchase of paper for various needy Societies. (See Mutual Aid.)

Poland

Up to the end of October the circulation figures for this year amounted to 175,000 copies of the Holy Scriptures, a figure which is far beyond any circulation hitherto achieved, and there is every indication that the circulation next year will be larger still.

Scotland

The manuscript of St. Matthew's Gospel in Tamashek of Timbuctoo (Sahara) has been received at the secretariate of the *National Bible Society of Scotland*, and arrangements are being made to print it. This will be the first part of the Scriptures to appear in this particular dialect.

A joint edition of 65,000 Nyanja Bibles, shared on a 50-50 basis with the B.F.B.S. has been printed in Scotland. A further 105,000 copies are now being printed, or are on order.

Sweden

A new translation of the New Testament in Yiddish by Dr. Paul Levertoff is being printed in Sweden. This edition is intended mainly for Displaced Persons in Germany, Austria and Italy.

Switzerland

On 28th September, a meeting of the *Union of Swiss Bible Societies* was held in Basle. After hearing a report from the General Secretary of the U.B.S. on the present world-wide problems of Bible distribution, the meeting voted a number of grants in favour of European Bible Societies or agencies in Italy, Hungary and Belgium. It also approved the publication of the Bible in Romansch (new translation) for the benefit of the linguistic minority in the lower Engadine, and the Valley of Münster.

Finally, the meeting decided to accept the proposal made by the Council of the U.B.S. to share with the latter a secretary whose task would be, on the one hand to represent the U.B.S. in the World Council of Churches, and on the other to develop in Switzerland an interest in Bible work and a sense of responsibility in the Swiss parishes for the task of distributing the Bible throughout the world, and more particularly in Europe.

Syria

On 19th June, 1949, a new Bible Depot was officially opened in Damascus. It will be administered under the joint agency of the British and American Societies, and will be served by Mr. Yussuf Sayes who has been loaned for this duty by the British Syrian Mission.

Uruguay

On 23rd September, 1949, a group representing six denominations met in Montevideo to form an Advisory Council of Uruguay, electing the Rev. C. T. Gettinoni as their President. This Council, like the one in Argentina, has been formed to facilitate co-operation in that area with the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES.

United Bible Societies

The Rev. William H. Fonger, A.B.S. agent in the Philippines, represented the U.B.S. at the Bangkok conference held under the joint auspices of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches.

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Mutual Aid. The Norwegian, Swedish and American Bible Societies have ordered or sent 15 tons of cellulose and 60 tons of paper to the Eastern Zone of Germany. The greater part of this will be put at the disposal of the *Altenburger Bibelgesellschaft*, which is now starting production.

Binding material has also been sent to the *Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft zu Berlin* for the binding of more than 100,000 Bibles printed in Leipzig—the first Bibles printed since the war in the Eastern zone—and also the chemicals necessary to convert into paper the 65 tons of cellulose the E.H.B. still has at its disposal.

The American Bible Society has forwarded 50 tons of cellulose to the *Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt* for printing for Western Germany.

All these gifts have been made to the *Verband der Evangelischen Bibelgesellschaften in Deutschland* (Federation of German Bible Societies.)

The American Bible Society has also paid for 300 tons of paper, to be put at the disposal of the *Japan Bible Society*.

The Norwegian Bible Society has ordered 30 tons of paper to be sent to the *Hungarian Bible Committee*.

The British and Foreign Bible Society has sent about 255 tons of paper to Hungary (30), China (50) and India and Ceylon (175).

The Union of Swiss Bible Societies has set aside some money for supplying the *Hungarian Bible Committee* with special items of binding material needed in Budapest.

Roman Catholicism and the Bible

Belgium : new translation of the Bible :—

The publishing house of the *Abbaye de Maredsous* in Belgium is printing an 8vo Bible in a new translation based on the original texts. This Bible will run to 1,750 pages, not including the 32 pages of introduction to the various books of the Bible. These introductions will refer to the author and the date of the book, to its contents and main divisions, and to its " eternal value "—that is, its meaning in the plan of God. The Bible will also contain a few notes mainly of a historical and geographical nature.

The first edition of 16,000 copies will be ready for the beginning of next year at 140 Belgian francs per copy. The Crampon Bible, which is the only modern Catholic Bible in one volume in French, costs about twice as much. The Bibles of the Bible Society (similar size) cost about 80 to 100 Belgian francs.

The Abbaye de Maredsous has already circulated 22,000 New Testaments and 350,000 Gospels and Acts in this translation within two years.

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Belgium: Bible study conference :—

A Bible study conference took place in Louvain at the beginning of September, when all the theology professors of exegesis in Belgium gathered together for two days. The members of the conference expressed their desire to meet every year, if possible.

Miscellaneous

Just try to think of this news in the light of Bible Society work :—

It has been stated that there are about 8 million lepers in the world to-day ; 300,000 of these live in French colonies, and 2-3 million in India.

*

602,925 persons have been resettled by the International Refugee Organisation during its first two years of activity.

Norway is to accept the blind refugees whom no country has yet been willing to receive.

*

Over half the workers of the world do not earn more than £25 a year.

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According to U.N.E.S.C.O. statistics, 19 million children of school age in South America do not receive any instruction. The total number of illiterates out of a population of 93½ millions, amounts to 70 millions.

*

A news sheet in Braille is being published for 7,000 blind people in Western Germany.

VISIT TO BERLIN

September, 1949

Olivier Béguin

Berlin West

WHILE the plane circles through the low clouds which hide Berlin from view, my thoughts go back to previous visits to the Capital : I have memories of strict rationing, darkness, unemployment and the ceaseless hum of aircraft carrying out the air-lift ; of people harrassed in expression and despondent in attitude whose hopes have all shrivelled up. What shall I find this time in a Berlin that is once again linked by rail, road and water with the Western zones ?

Upon landing, the Tempelhof airfield appears deserted, lifeless. There are a few planes here and there on the grass or on the loading runways ; the aerial in the form of a curved grid, belonging to the radio and radar service has ceased turning.

From the very first I am struck by something new in the city : the taxis. A wide yellow stripe round the coachwork immediately distinguishes them. They were reintroduced only a little while ago. My experiences in Europe

during the past few years have shown me that the return of public taxis—there always have been and still are in Berlin taxis used exclusively by the occupation authorities—is the sign of a return to a more or less normal life.

And indeed, supplies in Berlin West have almost returned to normal. In the food-shops there is plenty of everything ; nothing is lacking in the way of clothes, household articles, shoes, books. Ration cards are no longer even necessary. The black market has disappeared ; all the hundreds of black marketeers have also gone who used to crowd around the entrances to the S-Bahn (elevated railway), or along the Kurfürstendamm and who, with an air of mystery, would offer to the passer-by cigarettes, chocolate, coffee, fruit or meat.

One thing is, however, lacking—only one, but that an essential—namely money. The same complaint which I had already heard in the West is more evident, more urgent here. A typical phrase occurs in every conversation held with various persons : " Yes, things are better now. But unfortunately, whereas we used to have too much money and nothing to buy, now we have too much to buy and not enough money."

Most of the countries of Europe either have gone through this phase, or are going through it. It follows that of rationing, the black market and inflation or monetary instability.

But in Berlin this phase is accentuated by a peculiar phenomenon which may remove the transitory nature which it has known elsewhere. Although the blockade has been lifted and although it is possible to circulate between Berlin West and Berlin East without meeting any obstacles or control, yet there is an invisible barrier which is a more watertight division of the city into two than any police barrier : the system of two monies.

The Western allies introduced the westmark ; the Russians replied with an eastmark. For a certain period the two marks lived more or less side by side in the Western sector ; but to-day trade is almost impossible ; any firm having its headquarters in the West (Berlin or the Western zones) must pay in westmarks any orders given or purchases made in the Russian zone or sector. More exactly, a firm situated in the Russian zone cannot accept from a firm situated in the Western zone (or sector) a direct payment in eastmarks. The payment must be made in westmarks to the Chamber of Commerce ; the latter then, in its turn, pays to the manufacturer or trader the equivalent of the sum received at an exchange rate of 1 westmark=0.85 eastmark. On the other hand, a firm situated in Berlin West which sells its products in the Eastern zone or sector (this is the case of all publishers, for instance, and also that of the Berlin Bible Society) only receives payments in eastmarks which are not changed by the Chamber of Commerce, but which can be exchanged in the Western sector at the rate of 6 eastmarks for one westmark. The cost price of a Bible in Leipzig is about 4.20 mk. The Berlin Bible Society which has its headquarters in West Berlin should, unless a special exception is made of the case and this had not been granted at the time when these lines were written, pay 4.70 westmarks per copy. In order to cover expenses, i.e. to recuperate the 4.70 westmarks, it would have to sell the Bibles in the Eastern zone at 28.20 eastmarks ! The ridiculousness of such a situation is obvious.

Berlin West is in danger of asphyxiation ; for this situation does not only affect commerce, but also salaries to the same degree. Salaries in the East and in the West are approximately the same. A workman in the Eastern sector is paid in eastmarks, whether he lives in that sector or not. If he lives

in the West, the purchasing value of his salary is one sixth of its nominal value. In order to meet the catastrophic effects of such a situation and so as not to increase unemployment (there are still 225,000 persons unemployed out of 2 million inhabitants in Berlin West), the city will exchange 60% of the salary (up to a limit of 200 marks) at the rate of 1:1, plus 25 marks per child. In the case of the higher incomes (directors, professors, etc.) only a smaller proportion of the salary is exchanged at the rate of 1:1. For example, for a salary of 800-900 marks per month, the city will only change 60-80 marks, the remainder has to be exchanged at the rate of 6:1.

Further complications : a firm situated in the West may have a post cheque account in the East, but it cannot withdraw any funds from that account. Employees of the firm living in the sector are allowed to have a personal account and can withdraw up to 300 marks per week.

These are but a few examples ; many others could be given, but all go to produce an atmosphere of tension, fever and agitation which is wearing out the nerves of all. The slightest formality takes hours and means that a person has to pass from one office to another ; responsibilities are divided and until all have come to an agreement, there will be hours, days and weeks frittered away.

This explains why the first Bibles printed in the East are only just coming off the press now, four years after the end of hostilities ; it also explains why the Berlin Bible Society is continually faced with the prospect of bankruptcy, and why the provision of Scriptures for the East by the West is continually meeting insurmountable difficulties.

Under these conditions the task and activity of the churches, and of Christian institutions of all kinds in Berlin West is not easy. Their finances are in a disastrous state ; in August last the ecclesiastical authorities in West Berlin had not a Pfennig left with which to pay salaries ; in 6 months the Kirchliche Hochschule (Church High School) has found its expenses exceeding its receipts by more than double ; a publishing house specialising in the production of books for religious instruction has lost 80,000 westmarks alone as a result of the differences of exchange.

Glimpses toward the East

The newspapers and conversations in the West are full of accounts of police control, of raids and of the insecurity which await the Westerner who dares to penetrate into the Eastern sector of Berlin. People are distrustful, afraid . . . . . One Berliner told me that he had never set foot " on the other side."

I was therefore a little nervous when I got in the S-Bahn which took me to Alexander Platz. Several friends had told me that there was no risk in going to visit the headquarters of the Berlin Missionary Society. As in Budapest two years ago, I found this famous iron curtain and these so-called controls quite invisible. I must have walked for an hour in the " Russian " sector : I saw one Russian soldier on the platform of a train. There were the normal number of policemen about, normally equipped and they did not show any astonishment when a foreigner asked them the way. This I report in order to give an answer to the many tendencious stories that are passed around.

But a person who looks fit, is wearing a respectable suit and shoes that are well-polished and in good shape, presents a sharp contrast to the grey and

desolate background of pallid faces, threadbare clothes, faded dresses and down-at-heel or shapeless shoes, all of which give a general impression of makeshift. It is true that the East of Berlin was always the poor and proletarian part of the city, and the quarter around Alexander Platz where I found myself was never very elegant, nor was it much in the way of a business quarter, although the square itself was a business centre. But the streets are lacking in the animation of those in the West—they have not yet returned to life, as has Berlin West.

The shops are poorly patronised and I noted some prices which are numerically parallel to those in the West and some even lower :

1 litre of milk=0.50 mk. ;	1 kg. black bread=0.34 mk. ;
1 kg. butter=3.60 mk. ;	1 egg=0.40 mk. ;
1 kg. sugar=1.75 mk. ;	10 kg. potatoes=1.40 mk.

Salaries are about 150-200 eastmarks per month for unskilled workers (200-250 in the West), 350-400 for skilled workers (450-500 in the West) and 700-800 for professors (about the same in the West). Stakhanovist workers may earn up to 600-800 eastmarks a month, but they are only a minority.

Strict rationing prevents the Berliner of the West from coming and buying his provisions cheap in the East : the only possibility would be to buy in the big State-run shops which are authorised to sell without coupons, but at exorbitant prices which are sometimes as much as ten times those of goods bought on the ration. Even by exchanging his westmarks for 6 times as many eastmarks, the Berliner of the West finds no advantage in buying in these big shops.

The Germans of the West are either badly informed or else ignorant of the situation in the Russian zone. Their information is chiefly gleaned from the numerous " fugitives " who pass from East to West. A German of the West who has been into the Eastern zone is rare indeed. Berlin itself is only a half-open window between East and West.

The situation in the Eastern zone itself is generally described as being more critical even, from the point of view of food, than that of Berlin East. In particular, it seems that meat coupons are seldom honoured ; fish is more or less impossible to find. The people of independent professions, the intellectuals, who do not benefit from the No. 1 ration cards given to heavy manual workers and who do not get the special allocations distributed in the factories, are in an extremely difficult situation. In view of the insufficient rations, circumstances force them to buy their provisions in the State-run shops which swallow up almost the whole of their salaries. There is no question of buying a pair of shoes or some new clothes ; they must still live on the reserves of the past ! However, it would seem that the great financial difficulties are limited to a minority. Otherwise, how would Church collections still be relatively good ; how would it be possible to put 5 marks aside for a Bible ?

The Germany of the East still seems to be at the stage where there is a lack of goods and a (relative) surplus of means of payment, and many of those who go to the West are very disappointed when they find it is not the paradise of abundance and riches which they imagined they would find there.

But actually it is the spiritual uncertainty more than the material situation which oppresses the Germans of the East most : the rumours which run around, either true or false ; the stories which pass from mouth to mouth. Budapest in 1945 was just the same : anyone going there was prepared to be assassinated or robbed or deported at every street corner !

All the time, in the course of my contacts in Berlin, I found myself comparing the situation of Berlin East and the Eastern zone—or rather what I could guess of it behind the exaggerated stories and interpretations and the facts on which they were based—with what I had seen in the course of my various journeys behind the iron curtain. Berlin East and Eastern Germany to-day make me think of Budapest 1945-1947. A country occupied, in ruins, burdened with reparation debts, a country where a new order is coming into being under the dictatorial and police rule of a minority. Experience has advanced further in the other countries of Eastern Europe ; the facts are more clear and definite. It is difficult to say whether the situation will develop along the same lines in Germany, given the peculiar circumstances and the delay there has been : many in the East are counting on an early solution of the conflict in which Germany is the stake, and think that the Russians will give up the idea of " keeping " Eastern Germany. The wiser ones, it seems to me, are those who are less blissfully optimistic and who, rather than speculate about an uncertain political future, are seeking to bring into the difficult circumstances of to-day the only message of hope, the only word of truth, the only source of consolation and courage : Jesus Christ.

I hope to be able to publish in a subsequent issue of the News Bulletin an article giving information on the question of evangelisation in Eastern Germany. Here again, a comparison with the other countries of Eastern Europe is inevitable : political and social transformations seem to open up everywhere a path for the evangelising activity of the Church. Possibly because the material power and terrestrial authority of the Church are taken away from her, and the Church—the churches—return to the path and the courage of true missionary testimony, the Bible is at the centre of this testimony, as it is at the centre of the religious education of youth in Eastern Germany.

It is true that religious instruction is not obligatory (the Nazis had already taken the schools away from the Church) ; but the Church is now taking care of the religious education of children. For this purpose, 15,000 catechists are at present being prepared for this ministry and the foundation of their preparation is the study of the Bible.

The Bible and the Bible Societies

The real reason for my journey to Berlin was to take part in the meeting of the Union of German Bible Societies (Verband der evangelischen Bibelgesellschaften in Deutschland). For the first time since the war the representatives from the West went to Berlin where they were able to meet as many representatives of the Eastern Societies. The majority of the latter had always had to abandon the idea of travelling to the West for the previous meetings of the Verband.

The difference in situation between East and West in the realm of Bible production and distribution was apparent here in all its intensity. On the one side the production of the Stuttgart Bible Society is sufficient to cover the current needs of the Western zones (with the exception of the supplies to refugees) and, on the other side, not a single Bible had yet come off the press in the Eastern zone by September last. The blockade had prevented any Scriptures from being sent from the West, and censorship forbids the importation of books printed in the West.

In order to increase the production, a second Bible Society—the old Bible Society of Altenburg (Thuringia)—has decided to resume its printing activity side by side with the Berlin Society. The first aim of this Society

is to provide catechists with the concordance and Bible dictionary published by Stuttgart ; furthermore, a first edition of 100,000 middle-octavo Bibles is to be begun as soon as possible, also using the plates provided by Stuttgart.

The Berlin Bible Society which hopes to have at least 100,000 16mo Bibles ready for Christmas, will also start on another edition of 100,000 Bibles and will print an edition of the Zürich Bible (also known under the name of Zwingli Bible), the best of the modern German translations of the Bible, particularly of the Old Testament. These Bibles are primarily intended for catechists and for student communities where the study of the Bible has been specially developed.

In the West, side by side with current production a special edition of the Bible at an extremely low price is planned for refugees. 200,000 copies will be printed by summer 1950.

The German Bible Societies have also decided to proceed with the printing of a " Probe-Ausgabe " (test edition) of the revised Luther text of the Old Testament. The New Testament which first appeared in 1938, also as a " Probe-Ausgabe," will now be printed in its final text, taking account of the criticisms made after the publication of the " Probe-Ausgabe."

In order to become an official version, the text must be accepted by each regional church (Landeskirche) ; the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany can but recommend the adoption of the text, for the final decision rests with the Landeskirchen.

One final important decision was also taken in Berlin ; the Bible Societies have decided to appoint, for a trial period, a Travelling Secretary whose main task will be to help the various Bible Societies in the Western zone to develop, in the areas which they cover, a missionary spirit and a new interest in the work and responsibility of the Bible Societies.

Certain Bible Societies are again receiving the product of collections made in the churches on the occasion of a Bible Sunday during the year ; but this is more ecclesiastical routine, rather than the sign of a vital interest, and now that the Bible Societies which took part in the Bünde Conference (a conference which gathered together last April in Bünde a certain number of representatives of German Bible Societies and of delegates from the foreign Bible Societies) and also in the United Bible Societies' Conference at Seabury House have had a renewed vision of the world mission of the Bible Societies, they must transmit this vision to the Church and to the parishes in such a way that they will no longer be alone, but will be carried by the Christians in Germany for their share in the fulfilment of this missionary task.

It is obvious that this new activity will first of all be begun in the West where conditions have, to a certain extent, returned to normal and where campaigns for promoting the reading of the Bible and its distribution—both near and far—are still very necessary. Such work would be neither impossible nor useless in the East, but it is important that, before starting on it there, the Bible Societies should have Bibles available and that they should first have covered the most urgent needs. Moreover, when this decision was taken at the meeting, it was specifically stated that this post was not only foreseen for the West.

We should greet this new development with joy, for in it we can see an act which assures the full adhesion and participation of the German Bible Societies in the life and vision which the United Bible Societies is attempting

to maintain in the sight of all. We believe this is the first step towards that so important aspect of all Bible Society activity—missionary work—both in the country concerned and throughout the world, and we can but be thankful for this development and surround with our prayers the one who will be given this sometimes thankless and also difficult task, which is however one always rich in blessing.

I could not close this paragraph without pointing out that this decision has been made possible, thanks to the help of the American Bible Society which will finance this plan for some time, and will be glad to share this responsibility with anyone who would like it, until the experiment has borne fruit and the German Bible Societies in their turn take up the torch together and carry it on further themselves.

Indeed, in our United Bible Societies, real collaboration does not only consist in sending Bibles, paper and funds to those who have not the means available to cover their own production ; they must also be helped to discover the ways and means whereby, from being helped, they become helpers. We have not to do their work for them, nor to assume the responsibility that is theirs, that would be a static way ; but we have to take the dynamic way, that which gives the responsibility (at the same time as helping them to bear it) to those who are not yet ready to assume it alone, so that they will not think that all has been done and will keep before them the vision of that which remains to be done.

N.B. I have said nothing about the ecclesiastical situation, but the scope of such a subject would go beyond the limits of these few pages and the intention of this report. The German churches are in full evolution : a confessional Lutheran revival is in full force ; closer ecumenical collaboration than in the past has also developed between the Landeskirchen and the Free Churches. Centralisation and decentralisation both have their partisans ; some would see in the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland a national Church, others a federation of regional churches which maintain their full independence. In the East, the problem of Church and Communist government is not evident, at least for the present, under an aspect which would give it the nature of a conflict.

One stage has been passed—that of the fight against Nazism ; this test which was rich in instruction, marks all the present evolution of which we tend to seize only the passing trait, the isolated event, when it seems much more that a profound transformation is taking place—as moreover in the rest of Europe—which will lead to the revision of the whole ecclesiastical situation and to deep changes in the life of the churches. The falling away of the masses is becoming evident and the Church has still to find her way of approach and her means of action with regard to them. The Evangelical Academies—which group laymen together by professions for conferences of a shorter or longer duration on themes relative to the various professions—the evangelical communities of students, the ecclesiastical youth movements, the evangelistic weeks, the home mission, the foreign missions, all these groups are working on this problem of the present witness of the Church in the world and more particularly among the masses ; all are trying new experiments and all are seeking to start off from the Word of God, putting it at the centre of their research and action.

The Church in Germany : a world in the process of transformation, a world in travail, where the main lines are difficult to discern and where the

essential often disappears behind the secondary : but an evolution typical of Europe, an evolution which could call into question even so much as the foundations of our traditional national churches.

It is not surprising to find that all this has its echo in the realm of the Bible Societies. On the contrary these convulsions, these conflicts, these efforts are also forcing them to come out of their torpor and their quietude and are also leading them, I hope, to start on a new way.

FAR EASTERN JOURNEY

February-May, 1949

William J. Platt

Itinerary

My journey took me to Shanghai, the main centre of our Far Eastern activity, to Hong Kong, Canton, Ningpo, Fatshan, and as far inland as Yunnan—some 800 or more miles. In planning visits to the interior there was no guarantee that I should be able to get out again within a reasonable time, and on that account I had to forego visits to certain places in North and Central China. In addition to visiting China I was to get a brief visit to Japan. One of the most valuable parts of the journey consisted of conferences with many Christian workers including Bible Society people. Mr. Ian Morrison of Singapore, Mr. Curwen Smith of Indo-China, Mr. J. C. F. Robertson of Korea, were good enough to make special journeys to meet me, and during my outward journey I had talks with Mr. Peter Voth, the American Bible Society representative in Siam, and with Mr. H. J. Harwood at Rangoon (relieving Mr. Willans in Burma). I was privileged to attend a representative conference of the leaders of the Chinese Churches in Shanghai, and naturally I visited various presses and Bible Houses and saw something of the staff and headquarters of the Chinese Christian publishers, the Christian Literature Society, various schools, universities, hospitals and Missions. Not least amongst the opportunities offered me was to preach in the Hong Kong Cathedral, to conduct services in a variety of churches and to talk to Rotary and other more general groups of people.

General Conditions

Few things, I imagine, could make one more aware of the general conditions now prevailing over so wide an area of Asia than an outward air journey such as I made. Egypt, with anti-aircraft guns on the Alexandria water-front was at war with Israel. On the Calcutta airfield, a British subject and several other people had been murdered 24 hours before our arrival. At Rangoon, armies faced each other on opposite sides of the city while a good rice crop waited to be harvested. In Siam, we only just missed an armed dispute between the army and the navy, with the airfield as its centre. When we arrived at Hong Kong we found an ordered life, offering to some two million people—double its normal population—security and stability. At the time of my arrival in China, Communist forces were still 100 miles away from Shanghai and peace negotiations had not yet broken down, yet even then in cities far outside the war zone, road and river traffic was often cut by brigands

or guerillas. In distant Kunming one heard machine-gun practice daily in the city, and by the time I left Shanghai life was rather tense. Across the border in French Indo-China it was impossible with any degree of safety to go outside Hanoi city.

From all this I gathered a rather realistic and (with the speed of air-travel) even a moving appreciation of the ferment now moving in the life of Eastern Asia. No mere activity of agitators is sufficient to explain such a widespread stirring in the minds of millions of men and women—representing perhaps one third of the human race—and to account for such symptoms by the one word " Communism " is to over-simplify matters. To-day, the voice of the masses, who have been underfed for generations and who in recent years have been subjected to intense physical discomfort and penury, is welling up in a tumultuous cry for a more abundant life. Japanese war-time propaganda and (as an Asiatic people) her war successes, made a deep impression on people everywhere. Brigandage and devastating war have terribly impoverished the Chinese people, whose life (we must never forget) dominates the whole Far Eastern scene. The consequences of the complete collapse of the " Gold Yuan " currency, with the constant burden of hungry troops living on the country-side, had made conditions intolerable. Above this clash of forces, working on a continental scale through and underneath it all, has been the strong, firm voice of post-war Russia. Her message has come like a clarion call.

To-day, therefore, we meet the Far East, self-conscious and articulate, where even the coolie slowly " becomes a man." We see the common people longing for relief from their intense suffering ; literally waiting for a voice ; for leadership in the working out of their own economic and political salvation. To the masses " Salvation " means release from an instability and insecurity which are no longer tolerable. Russia has a plan which to them seems relevant, and some of China's young people travelled many dangerous miles to the North to join the Communist ranks—even from the wealthy homes in the South.

A Diagnosis of the Problem

I have stressed these conditions because events in the Far East are not merely due to the " hand of Russia ", it is the soil which is fertile. Moscow's message is being sown in land already ploughed by war and poverty and insecurity. Of course, the mass of rural China cannot read, has no wireless set, and holds no ideology other than a longing for a solution to its problems. Whereas China's leaders formerly looked to Western Europe and the U.S.A. for guidance, they now look to Moscow ; life at the moment is apocalyptic and they hope to " build a kingdom which will last a thousand years." Puritanical austerity and tight discipline most assuredly animate scores of thousands of Mao Ze Tung's forces (many of whom live on a diet of millet soup with meat only once a week.) One day perhaps China's age-long individualism and love of freedom, her pride, her refusal to be " organised ", will re-assert themselves. At any rate a totalitarian way of life can offer only a temporary expedient but the Christian Gospel offers the permanent way of salvation. Our work, therefore, far from being irrelevant in the present situation, becomes increasingly urgent.

The Chinese Church

For years, the spread of Christianity in China and the idea of gradual progress towards a better world have been almost synonymous terms. Now, the voices which proclaim the better world tend to deny the validity of all

religion. To-day, the position of the Chinese Church has been likened to a Gethsemane experience. A new wistfulness is apparent on many sides. Observers who know, speak of a great receptivity amongst the ordinary people and with the heart-searching which is now beginning amongst them, the Chinese people will probably turn, as others in like conditions have done before, to the Gospel for light and guidance in a new age. The Chinese hate war, love peace, and even reverence wisdom, and it may be that China will assimilate Communism as she has so often done with other creeds. It behoves us to keep to the fore the undying vitality of the Christian religion.

The Aftermath of Ten Years of War

During my journey I had continually to remind myself of one major fact in the situation : that in addition to her present civil war, China had suffered a long invasion by the Japanese over a large part of her territory. This observation will seem a commonplace to those who know China, but when one sees the busy crowds, the patience of her people, her tenacity of life, her resiliency and the activity of her country-side which seems almost normal, one has to make a deliberate effort to recall those years of war. From the Bible Society's point of view we, too, must remember the effect of those years. Pre-war Scripture circulation had reached approximately 10,000,000 in 1934—whereas ten years later it had fallen to 70,000. Our colportage staff fell from between 300 and 400 to 9. To-day, in the latter half of 1949, our circulation is back again to nearly half the pre-war peak level, but the weakness of our country-wide organisation and the lack of personnel cannot be explained in any other way than as a consequence of the major disruption caused by the Japanese invasion.

The New Urgency

When I saw the multitudes in China, literally without a shepherd ; the eager and vivacious crowds of Japan reading, reading, reading ; the book-stalls in Calcutta well stocked with non-Christian literature, I was forced to ask myself : Are we, as a Bible Society, doing all we ought to do to meet this challenge which is now almost world-wide ? Are we co-operating as fully as we might with other Christian literature forces ?

Our generation may yet see what is sometimes called " organised religion " shaken to its foundations—perhaps shaken into new life—before this world movement has run its course. Western governments are reviewing their attitudes to new Asia. In the Christian missions, in large institutions, schools, colleges, hospitals, great changes are being planned. Even the idea of a "paid ministry" in the Christian Churches of China may become difficult, and Dr. H. H. Tsin (General Secretary of the Church of Christ in China) has already said : " A lay ministry will need to be strengthened, trained and its vision widened." Christians may be permitted to carry on only in the degree that they "serve" (in a material sense) the new China. Church workers are now co-operating in a " Christian Workers' Union." Yet for the Christian, social uplift and good fellowship, indispensable as they are, cannot replace the circulation of the Gospel itself. China must see Jesus. That is the sovereign work of the Churches, and it must be set forth by precept as well as by example. Men cannot follow Christ unless they know what He said, what He did, and where He leads, and such requirements involve an intensification of Bible Society work. We must build up again our team of workers. We must train colporteurs. We must educate the Chinese Church in support of the Bible Society. And all this must be done with Chinese nationals well to the fore in the new China Bible Society.

THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND THE BIBLE

WOLFGANG SCHWEITZER

THERE are several links which bind the World Council of Churches and the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES. One of the things which will probably interest readers of this Bulletin more than any other aspect of the World Council's work is the study undertaken in the realm of Biblical interpretation, and the use of the Bible for our common witness in the world. A brief report on these activities may perhaps be welcomed, but before going into details let us ask why the World Council is bound to pay special attention to the Bible and its interpretation in our time.

First of all there is the fact that the Bible is one of the bases of our ecumenical discussions. The whole Church of Christ, including all the different confessions and denominations, uses the Bible. They may use it in different ways : some more for liturgical purposes, others mainly for preaching. But the Bible is there, like the Lord's Prayer and other things which we are sure all Christians have in common. It is therefore most natural that in all our ecumenical conversations and discussions we try again and again to discover our common ground in Holy Scripture. It is acknowledged as the testimony for the beginning of all Church history ; it is a witness to the faith of the Early Church, from which later all the different confessions and denominations have been derived. If we ask our brethren in our now separated churches which of us has been unfaithful to our Lord Jesus Christ (and we have to ask each other this question), then the Bible is obviously our main criterion. Thus some Protestants may ask their brethren in the more " Catholic " churches : " Have you really understood St. Paul aright ? ", whereas the " Catholic " churches may ask the Protestants : " Do you really take the Commandments of our Lord seriously ? " And then the quest for truth leads us all to the Bible. We have then to open it together, and to discover together what the will of our Lord really is.

It would be a great thing if in all our interconfessional conversations we would use no other arguments but Biblical ones. This is not always taken for granted, and we are thus obliged to study the question of the authority of the Bible. Is it the only authority we Christians have to accept ? Or are there other authorities which may carry less weight, but which still need to be recognised ? The answers to this question differ, as everyone knows who is in touch with Christians of other confessions. Some hold very strongly that for a Christian there is no other authority than the one which we find in Holy Scripture. Others put the authority of the Church, her leaders and her tradition side by side with it. Others again would claim that modern science has a right to be heard.

These are only a few examples to indicate where our difficulties lie. The fact that the Bible has some place in every Church on earth does not yet mean that it is everywhere regarded as the only basis of our faith. It is therefore a very urgent task for the ecumenical movement to assess the real position of the Bible, so that we know where we stand when we are talking to Christians of other confessions.

In some conferences which have been arranged by the Study Department of the World Council of Churches, considerable agreement on this question has already been reached. The authority of the Bible is not the authority of a book, nor even of individual passages which we may understand in different ways. In order to get a clear concept of its authority we have to

ask ourselves what the Bible itself intends to be. And we find the answer in passages like St. John XX, 31 : " These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through his name." The Bible bears witness to Christ. He is the Lord of the Bible and the Bible has authority only because, and in so far as, it helps us to see *Him* more and more clearly.

But that is not all. Many of us believe that it is one of the most urgent tasks of the ecumenical movement to unite the Christian forces in this world for a common witness. Again and again it appears that we speak with a divided voice to the modern world in its perplexities, especially in social and political matters. Many of us believe that the weakness of our testimony and the scandal of our division can only be overcome by a determined attempt to hear the living Word of God anew. It is only there that we can hope for fresh guidance. We should thus try to define the Biblical basis for our testimony in this world. If we start from here, the possibilities for really united witness are certainly greater than if we try to discover some vague principles, which hang in the air.

It is for this reason that the Study Department of the World Council of Churches has been asked to prepare an international symposium on " The Biblical Authority for the Church's Social and Political Message To-day." We hope that this book will be published in 1950. If our Christian convictions in these matters are to have any weight, they should, we believe, be based on sound Biblical thinking. The acceptance of this theme should not suggest that the World Council intends to fall back to the outmoded social gospel theology in its liberal form. Many of those who supported its views twenty years ago have meanwhile changed their minds to a considerable extent. Apparently the two greatest mistakes of this approach to social and political problems were (*a*) that the Biblical conception of the Kingdom of God was not taken seriously in its eschatological sense ; and (*b*) that the goodness of human nature was over-estimated in a way which contradicted the Biblical message of sin and salvation. But it would also be a mistake if we were to go to the other extreme and leave the social and political realm to its own devices. Christians who dare not face up to social and political problems, but try to withdraw from the world, are in fact by their attitude very frequently helping to maintain unjust situations. The Bible says rather clearly that we are responsible for the well-being of our neighbours. It may be necessary for us to learn to speak of sin not only in individual but also in collective terms. A society, a class, a nation can sin, even while keeping the actual letter of the law. It is this spirit against which the prophets protested again and again. Human laws which yesterday may have been relatively good, can to-day become a means of preserving evil social and political conditions. So we have again and again to ask ourselves, what is the will of God to-day and whether we have sinned against it.

The Bible gives us the answer to these questions by proclaiming the message of the Lordship of Christ. He has sent us into this world to be His witnesses. What does this mean in the social and political realm ? Are we not bound to tell the world that Christ's death and resurrection, which are testified by the Bible, have completely changed the meaning of life in this world ? We have to explain why the norms and standards, which we as Christians apply to social and political questions, differ from those of non-Christians. Many of us are convinced that we can ultimately find these norms only in the Bible. And finally we have to remind the world again and again that everyone is answerable to the Lord of history.

It is quite clear that in all these questions, Christians of different confessions and of different theological traditions can stand on firm ground, if only they will learn to read and interpret the Bible in the same way. This brings us to the third aspect of the World Council's work in Bible studies. Though we may acknowledge the authority of the Bible, and though we may be willing to use it as the basis for our testimony in this world, one great practical difficulty remains : do we not interpret it in different ways ? Very frequently we may find ourselves in the same position as the Ethiopian eunuch who read thus and was then asked by the Apostle Philip " Understandest thou what thou readest ? " and he had to reply : " How can I, except some man should guide me ? "

What we said above about the authority of the Bible has in fact helped us already a great deal in our attempts to lay down rules for the interpretation of the Bible, which are acceptable to many. It seems as if we can understand the Bible only if we read it as the message of Christ, and interpret the different passages in the light of this central message. It is like one of the beautiful stained-glass windows in our churches. If we stand too close to them we can only see the separate panes, which seem to make no sense. But if we stand back and look at the window in the right perspective, then every pane falls into place as a transparent part of the picture of our Lord Himself. This was the conclusion which we reached at a rather significant ecumenical study conference held at the Château de Bossey, near Geneva, in January, 1947. But we still had to work out a practical method of interpretation. If the simile of the stained-glass window is appropriate, the concrete question immediately arises : " How am I to read a particular passage ? " I must learn to see both its particular place and significance and its relation to the centre of the Biblical testimony. An attempt to answer these questions was made this year at the Wadham College Conference, Oxford. There twenty theologians from ten different denominations and confessions and eight countries met for a week as a sub-committee of the Study Department Committee of the World Council. They first discussed the problem of the interpretation of the Bible in theory on the basis of brief statements which had been prepared in advance. But then it appeared that we would probably make more progress if we opened the Bible itself and took a particular passage as a test case, in order to discover the measure of agreement which exists among us. The outcome was striking. Our unity was far greater than we had expected. After that we tried to lay down the points on which we had discovered agreement, and we print here some extracts of that document :

The necessary Theological Presuppositions of Biblical Interpretation

" It is agreed that the Bible is our common starting point, for there God's Word confronts us, a Word which humbles the hearers so that they are more ready to listen and to discuss than they are to assert their own opinions.

" It is agreed that the primary message of the Bible concerns God's gracious and redemptive activity for the saving of sinful man that He might create in Jesus Christ a people for Himself. In this the Bible's central concern, an authoritative claim is placed upon man and he is called upon to respond in faith and obedience throughout the whole of his life and work . . . . .

" It is agreed that the centre and goal of the whole Bible is Jesus Christ. This gives the two Testaments a perspective in which Jesus Christ is seen both as the fulfilment and the end of the law . . . .

" It is agreed that although we may differ in the manner in which tradition, reason and natural law may be used in the interpretation of Scripture, any teaching that clearly contradicts the Biblical position cannot be accepted as Christian . . . . .

The Interpretation of a Specific Passage

" It is agreed that in the case of an Old Testament passage, one must examine and expound it in relation to the revelation of God to Israel both before and after its own period. Then the interpreter should turn to the New Testament in order to view the passage in that perspective. In this procedure the Old Testament passage may receive limitation and correction, and it may also disclose in the light of the New Testament a new and more profound significance, unknown to the original writer.

" It is agreed that in the case of a New Testament passage one should examine it in the light of its setting and context ; then turn to the Old Testament to discover its background in God's former revelation. Returning again to the New Testament one is able to see and expound the passage in the light of the whole scope of Heilsgeschichte. Here our understanding of a New Testament passage may be deepened through our apprehension of the Old . . . . .

The Application of the Biblical Message to the Modern World

" It is agreed that if we are to receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures, we must discover the degree to which our particular situation is similar to that which the Bible presents. It must be remembered that absolute identity of situation is never found, and therefore the problem of adaptation becomes acute. Nevertheless in each new situation we must allow ourselves to be guided by the Bible to a knowledge of the Will of God . . . .

" It is agreed that in applying the Biblical message to our day, interpreters diverge because of differing doctrinal and ecclesiastical traditions, differing ethical, political, and cultural outlooks, differing geographical and sociological situations, differing temperaments and gifts. It is, however, an actual experience within the Ecumenical Movement, that when we meet together, with presuppositions of which we may be largely unconscious, and bring these presuppositions to the judgment of Scripture some of the very difficulties are removed which prevent the Gospel from being heard. Thus the Bible itself leads us back to the living Word of God."

The report may be regarded as a considerable step forward towards a better understanding of the use made of the Bible within the ecumenical family. If, on future occasions, the report is taken up for discussion, we would urge that such discussion should not be merely theoretical. The report is not a new theological creed which we are asked to accept or reject. It is rather meant as a suggestion for further study and an invitation to use the same method, which we considered successful. If we open the Bible and try to read and interpret it together, it will again and again lead us back to the living Word of God, to mutual understanding and to increasing unity of witness in the ecumenical movement.

Many of us believe that the ecumenical movement can ultimately do nothing better than ask Christians in all parts of the world : to take this book and read it ! We have experienced that there is a power in it which binds us together ; a power which constantly calls Christians and non-Christians to repentance ; a power which can and does renew the churches and their testimony in the world. It is God's almighty power.

THOSE AMAZING DEAD SEA SCROLLS

JOHN C. TREVER

IT is not difficult to understand why Bible lovers the world over have heralded the news of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls as the " greatest manuscript discovery of modern times." Coming from Palestine where the climate has been claimed for generations to be unsuitable for the preservation of ancient documents, the discovery is all the more startling. Newspapers, magazines, radio, and television have carried stories about the discovery with varying degrees of accuracy. Perhaps a brief summary, therefore, is in order.

So far, witnesses to a total of seventeen documents, Biblical and non-Bibical, have been found among the scrolls and fragments that are known to have come from the cave near the Dead Sea, about eight miles south of Jericho. It is quite probable that this number will increase as more of the two hundred fragments found by the excavators are indentified and classified. The exact number of fragments, in addition to the three scrolls so far reported to be in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has not yet been made known. The excavators, Mr. G. Lankester Harding, Director of Antiquities for Hashemite Jordan, and Père Roland de Vaux of the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem, estimate that the jars found in the cave may have contained as many as two hundred scrolls at one time. It is therefore possible that other scrolls are still in the possession of the Bedouins.

Among the seventeen documents so far in evidence, the complete Isaiah Scroll (DSIsa. A) in the possession of the Syrian Archbishop, Athanasius Y. Samuel, is still the most beautifully preserved, and probably the oldest of the documents found in the cave. (There is a difference of opinion here, since the excavators claim that the fragments of a scroll of Leviticus are older, while some others claim they are younger than DSIsa. A.) Twenty-four feet long by ten and five-sixteenths inches wide, with seventeen sheets of sheepskin sewn together with linen thread to accommodate the fifty-four columns of Hebrew writing, this scroll contains the entire book of Isaiah with its sixty-six chapters and very few lacunae. It varies in hundreds of instances from the Masoretic text of Isaiah, but still is a witness to the substantial accuracy of the book of Isaiah as we have known it from ninth and tenth century A.D. manuscripts. Most of the differences can be accounted for in three categories. (1) differences in spelling of words, (2) grammatical structure, and (3) mistakes in copying. Considering the amount of writing, there are relatively few differences of text. Among these, barely more than a dozen are significant enough to warrant inclusion in the footnotes, or in the text of the REVISED STANDARD VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT book of Isaiah being prepared by a committee of fifteen American scholars, and expected to appear in 1952. Many students of Hebrew will probably feel that a dozen or more other variations warrant serious consideration for superiority, but they have insufficient supporting evidence to warrant inclusion in this new authorized version of the Bible. But none of these variations will prove startling to the average reader.

Second in importance among the scrolls so far studied is the " Sectarian Document " or " The Book of Discipline." With its eleven columns of beautifully clear text on five sheets of sheepskin, together measuring about six feet in length, and nine and one-half inches high, this non-Biblical document shows many affinities to the documents of the Damascus sect, discovered

early in this century and published by Dr. Solomon Schecter. Dr. Millar Burrows is preparing a translation of the Book of Discipline which will appear in due time. It contains rules and regulations of the sect, part of whose library has now come to light. It opens with a group of admonitions to the adherents of the sect, or perhaps a sort of initiation ceremony for those entering the sect ; then gives some of the points of view of the sect, and closes with a series of rules and regulations with prescribed punishments for their infringement.

The third scroll in the possession of the Syrian Archbishop, who purchased his scrolls in July, 1947, from the Bedouins who found them in the Spring of 1947, is the Commentary on Habakkuk, a preliminary translation of which was published by Dr. William Brownlee (BASOR No. 112, December, 1948.) The writer of this interesting document did as many Bible interpreters do today : he treated the book of Habakkuk as though it were written in his own time (i.e., the Maccabean period.) Thus he interprets the name " Chaldeans " mentioned in Habakkuk 1 : 6 as referring to the Kitti'im (Greeks ?) who were oppressing his people when he wrote. The beginning of this document is badly broken, but apparently it contained at least thirteen columns originally and was about five and one-half feet long. It is less than six inches wide at present, the entire lower part of the scroll having disintegrated with time. It was made up of two sheets of leather sewn together.

Archbishop Samuel's fourth document has not yet been unrolled, though I succeeded in removing a substantial fragment from it in April, 1949, and from that have identified it as the lost book of Lamech, which may have been the source for the preparation of Enoch, chapters 106-108, as suggested by Dr. Charles Cutler Torrey. Mention in the press of a scroll of Enoch among those discovered refers to this document, which is written in Aramaic, with thirty-seven lines of finely written text in each column. How much of this important document can be preserved by the scientists who will open it, is a matter of conjecture only. It is hoped that the interior will prove to be in much better condition than the badly disintegrated exterior.

In addition to these four extensive documents, the Archbishop has several fragments among which I have found three substantial fragments of a scroll of Daniel (two distinct styles of writing are represented among the fragments—two scrolls ?), seven fragments representing two columns of a previously unknown scroll of Hebrew psalms, a small piece of papyrus with a few words on it, and a small piece of crudely inscribed leather, again with only a few words. This completes the materials in the possession of the Archbishop.

Dr. Eliezar L. Sukenik, professor of archeology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, succeeded in late November of 1947 in purchasing several other scrolls and fragments. He has made known the fact that his scrolls are three in number, when properly assembled : a scroll of " Songs of Thanksgiving ", which he describes as similar to our book of psalms ; a scroll of a " Battle Between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness," which may report an actual battle, or an imaginary future battle; and a third very fragmentary scroll of Isaiah (DSIsa. B.) Dr. Sukenik has sent sketches of the script to me, and there is no doubt that his scroll is considerably later in origin than DSIsa. A. The fact that its script stands near to that of the Habakkuk commentary and that its text is almost identical to the Masoretic (so Dr. Sukenik reports) probably will reflect significantly upon the development of the text of the old Testment during the time span represented by the scrolls (ca. 125 B.C.—ca. 25 A.D.) What other scrolls are represented by fragments in his possession he has not yet reported.

The cave in which these documents were discovered by Bedouins in the Spring of 1947 was re-discovered by Captain Akash Bey of the Arab Legion of Hashemite Jordan in February, 1949, and excavation was undertaken by G. Lankester Harding, in co-operation with Père Roland de Vaux. Dr. Ovid R. Sellers, then Director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, visited the excavation in process several times, and has published some brief reports on it.

Unfortunately the cave had been badly damaged by an unauthorized excavation in November, 1948, so that the work of the excavators was made extremely difficult. Nevertheless, their results were significant. About 200 fragments of manuscripts, many of them very small, were sifted from the debris. Among these Père de Vaux has identified fragments of Genesis, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Judges and the book of Jubilees. In addition, a fairly large scroll was found, but no report of its contents is available yet, since it has not been unrolled as far as I know.

The excavators found fragments of some forty pottery jars as well as pottery bowls which probably served as covers. The jars are all reported to be characteristic Hellenistic ware, and cannot have been made later than the first century, B.C. Thus the archeological findings tend to support the evidence from the script on the scrolls, giving the scholars a feeling of assurance that the earlier conclusions of dating of the scrolls were not without foundation.

But not all the mysteries relating to these amazing Dead Sea Scrolls have yet been unravelled. The full story is still not known. What new discoveries may come to light from this cave can only be surmised. With a discovery as complicated as this one, involving many individuals and several nations, all vying with each other for various controls, it may be some time yet before all the differences and conflicting reports will be resolved into one connected, accurate story. It must be remembered that this all has happened during the turbulent period leading up to and following the end of the British mandate.

In the meantime, we can be thankful that so many Bible manuscripts and other important documents have come to light. It all suggests that the future may hold for archeology and the Bible many surprises and significant discoveries.

CONVERTED BY THE BIBLE

Chandu Ray

IN giving a picture of what the Lord Jesus Christ has meant to me, and the way in which I came to believe in His saving power, I must first take you to my home in the early years of my life.

It usually happens that the mother has most influence on the formation of character, and so indeed my mother—while I was still a boy, and one of nine children, (I being the eighth child)—had a tremendous influence on my religious life. Night after night, after our dinner, we children would sit around her and she would either read out loud, or tell us from memory the wonderful stories of the heroes and heroines of India, and of gods and goddesses which were the backbone of Hindu faith. These stories were mostly drawn from the

Puranas and other Shastras, and thus very early in life both a religious and a national heritage were well supplied by means of these stories, told so lovingly and vividly by one whom we all adored.

Although my father was a Hindu, my mother's people were Sikhs, and so we had in our home the Granth Sahib (the holy book of the Sikhs.) My mother would rise between four and five in the morning, and as her first act would ceremoniously go into the Prayer Room and open the Granth Sahib and read from it in Gurmukhi. This exercise would go on sometimes for more than an hour, and she would be wrapt in meditation of the words of this holy book. On some mornings, after opening the Granth, she would wake me up and say, " Let us this morning go for worship to the temple ", and while it was yet dark we would both slip out of the house and go to the temple of the Sikhs where lovely hymns were sung, where portions were read from the Granth Sahib and expositions given. This would be over by eight in the morning, and we would return home for breakfast.

My mother's discipline in the home was never based on force or violent words, but it would be just a look and a word spoken quietly—" Son, you are late for your meal, and the whole family is waiting for you "—and that would be sufficient rebuke for any one of us.

Although we were never given a lot of money, yet our mother managed to see that we had plenty to read, and sufficient to prevent us falling into any temptations when we went away from home.

Until the age of 16 or 17, I do not remember ever having heard the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is just one single incident which I remember, and which may be connected with Christianity in those first 17 years of my life, and that was when in Hyderabad Sind a missionary lady was handing out little picture cards to children after a Sunday School meeting, and I shyly slipped across to ask for a picture card from her, and I took it home.

When in 1920 and 1921 the national struggle against British rule was at its height, I remember my brothers and I resigning from the government schools, and joining the national schools for our education. Also during that time, in our home, a change came in that we tried to wear home-spun rough cloth, so that the Manchester goods should not be encouraged in India. Apart from this, our home life from the point of view of politics, seemed to have been unaffected.

When I was 16 or 17 my mother asked me if I would accompany her on a pilgrimage to Northern India, as she said : " I do not think I have very long to live now, and I would like to make these pilgrimages, which the elders have commanded, before I die." This pilgrimage was indeed a thrilling thought for me, as I was only too ready for an adventurous journey to Amritsar, the Mecca of the Sikhs, to Ayudhia where Ram was born, Mattra where Krishna had spent part of his life, and to Kashi, Gaya, Budhgaya, Jugganath, and even to Kashmir. As I travelled about with her I saw that everywhere in these holy places of pilgrimage, there were only the outward acts of religion—to give some money here, to feed some holy person there, to give some rice in one place and to put some dates in another, to bathe in this river or that pool, to worship a countless number of idols and place our hands upon their feet and then on our foreheads—all this was empty of any spirituality, and I kept asking my mother what she got out of it. She, in her simple way said : " Son, I understand that you are missing something. I too miss it, but it is said in the holy books that it is meritorious to make these pilgrimages, and it has been my heart's desire that before I go from this world I should make them."

This may have satisfied my mother, but it did not satisfy a youth of 17. My search for God started then. By this time I had joined the family business of book-selling and publishing. We had a chain of bookshops, but my parents were wise enough not to let me start at the top. I began as an ordinary assistant, in order that I might pick up the work from the very bottom, and understand the dignity of an ordinary assistant's life.

During these years, with all the books that I wanted in the world around me, I read all types of literature, and in this reading I seemed to find satisfaction for my intellect, but very little for my soul. During this reading of English literature I came into contact with much of the Christian thought, and even read portions of the Bible, but it was not until eight years later, when I was 25 years old, and I went to pay a visit to the Bishop Cotton School, Simla, where the Rev. George Sinker was the Head, that I began to think seriously about Christianity.

As I stayed in his home, and as I attended the chapel, some sort of longing came into my heart. At home both mother and father had died, and the eldest brother who had started the business had also passed away. I was not very happy in business with my brothers, who because of the prosperity that had come to them, had rather changed the tone of their lives from that of a purely literary ideal, to one of social ambition. Whereas in the past we had had literary rooms where men and women interested in literature would come in and discuss books, now we began to have bridge parties, and even drinks.

When this happened I separated from my brothers, and I wrote to Mr. Sinker (now Bishop Sinker, late General Secretary of the Bible Society of India & Ceylon) asking if I could join the staff of the Bishop Cotton School. He at once sent a very warm welcome, and thus started a deep friendship. I think I was the first non-Christian to be taken on the staff of this school, but I was never made to feel that, and I joined every day in the chapel services, and took my daily share in the school activities, until two years afterwards, when George Sinker had very serious trouble with his eyes.

At this time he called me in to him, and asked me to read the Bible to him as he could no longer read for himself. As I read on from the 14th chapter of St. John's Gospel, a vision came before my eyes of the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I believed at that moment that no man can come unto the Father except by Him, even as He had said, and I also believed that according to His promise—" Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you "—He would grant my request for the healing of my friend.

That night we spent in prayer, and early in the morning, as dawn was breaking, I had the joy of full assurance of salvation, and I told George Sinker about this and said : " When you come back from the hospital seeing, will you baptize me ?" Indeed God did hear my prayer, for George Sinker sees to-day as well as I see, and within a month his eyes got well, and on the 30th June, 1939, in the school chapel in the presence of the Bishop of Lahore (G. D. Barne), I was baptized by George Sinker and afterwards confirmed by the Bishop. Ever since this I can truly say that every day has been happier than the past.

Within a very few months of my baptism I felt that the Lord would have me to go and tell my own people in Sind of the great things He had done for me, and I therefore told George Sinker about this desire. Needless to say he, being a missionary at heart, was thrilled with the idea, and told me to write to the Bishop of Lahore. The Bishop answered in one sentence, that my letter expressing the desire to become an evangelist to my own people had come to

him as a " snowdrop in the wilderness." He, however, wrote that he had no money to send me to a theological college, but as that was not my difficulty—and God had already provided for me—I was able to go immediately and take my theological training at Bishop's College, Calcutta. I was made a deacon at the Jubilee Service of the Narowal church, where on the first day I had to assist in ministering the Sacraments to over 5,000 people.

I was sent to Karachi, my place of birth, for my curacy and from there to Hyderabad Sind as a vicar. As I worked in these areas among my own people, who spoke Sindhi, I realised how much they needed the whole Bible in their own tongue, but during my missionary activities in Sind, where I had the charge of over 32 congregations, it was impossible to do any translation work. Mr. Bhagtani, who was entrusted with the translation work some seven years ago, had completed the Pentateuch, but was now seriously ill, suffering from tuberculosis. He was therefore no longer able to carry out the translation. Thus when the call came, at the end of 1947, that I should join the Bible Society, I felt that God would have me take up the secretaryship duties, so that I might be set free for a period to do the translation of the Bible into Sindhi.

To this end I came into the Bible Society, but I must however mention one fact : when the call came for me to do Bible work, I wrote to the General Secretary (at that time Canon George Sinker) asking whether the Bible Society wished to have an evangelist or an office manager. But the reply came quite definitely that the Society needed an evangelist, and so I could take on the task with a clear conscience, knowing that I could carry out my ministry as an evangelist, in addition to doing Bible translation and secretarial work.

Many joys have come to me since I joined the Bible Society staff. The contacts I have made with other Churches, both in India and Pakistan, as well as abroad, have been very enriching in experience, and naturally my heart is full of praise to Him Who has called me to be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world.

LET US PRAY

C. W. Noack

IT is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord,
and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High :

To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning,
and thy faithfulness every night,

Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery ;
upon the harp with a solemn sound.

For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work :
I will triumph in the works of thy hands.

O Lord, how great are thy works !
and thy thoughts are very deep.

Psalm 92, v. 1-5.

The Bible Society movement, from the beginning in 1804 until the present time, gives multitudinous occasions for thanks to God :

First of all for the basis and substance of every Bible Society work, His holy Word, which He "spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, and hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" ; that He has endowed with His Holy Spirit those men whom He had chosen to couch in human words His eternal truth, and those who should select and collect the Scriptures which, according to His will, were to be kept and brought as the Holy Bible to all mankind, while the earth remains.

" O Lord, how great are thy works !
and thy thoughts are very deep."

In the next place, thanks ought to be given to the Lord for the spirit which inflamed His servants to the foundation of the first Bible Society, and to the energetic instigation and support of a series of similar Bible Societies in many countries, so that in less than 20 years Bible production and distribution was taken up on a new scale. And in this way He has caused that in hundreds of tongues the holy Gospel has become comprehensible to the peoples.

Neither was it an idea just of man that led, in 1946, to the formation of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES. We honour the memory of the late Rev. Dr. John R. Temple, the first General Secretary of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, as a promoter of the co-operation, but God Himself is the author of the common work that has resulted in many kinds of mutual aid to overcome post-war difficulties, and in the foundation of new, and the revival of older national Bible Societies.

" O Lord, how great are thy works !
and thy thoughts are very deep."

Further, the preceding pages of this Bulletin will draw our attention to the active power of the Bible in revealing God's way of salvation. Reading on from the 14th chapter of St. John's gospel to a missionary who has trouble with his eyes, a young Hindu is apprehended by the Lord Jesus Christ, and his life has changed. Many rival forces are at work in the Near and in the Far East, as well as in Africa and elsewhere, materialistic ideologies, nationalist movements, and the convulsion between ancient paganism and modern godlessness. We are in temptation of despair by the thought of this confusion and struggle. But, there is the powerful Word, that shall not return void, but shall accomplish what God pleases, and shall prosper in the thing whereto He sent it. And we take heart again.

" For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work ;
I will triumph in the works of thy hands."

We take heart also to pray, that God may make us faithful to the Bible work He has given into our charge, that He may strengthen our willingness to serve Him, and that He may bless our fellowship in the Holy Ghost ; that He may preserve, in His grace, every soul who believes in Jesus Christ, and that He may extend His kingdom of salvation to the ends of the earth.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost ; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

Notes on Contributors

Rev. Dr. E. M. North : Chairman of the Council of the United Bible Societies ; General Secretary of the American Bible Society.

Rev. Dr. W. C. Somerville : General Secretary of the National Bible Society of Scotland.

Dr. H. C. Rutgers : General Secretary of the Netherlands Bible Society.

Rev. W. J. Platt : General Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Rev. Dr. W. Schweitzer : Secretary of the Study Department of the World Council of Churches, Geneva.

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Rev. C. Ray : Secretary for Pakistan of the Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon.

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